

Beginning of

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THE ORIGIN AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT
OF THE EUCHARIST

By

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P R E F A C E

"Few human actions are explicable aside from an understanding of their underlying beliefs," says a recent writer.¹ The value of the Eucharist for us does not lie in its inexplicability. "Where there is no proper moral insight, everything even the highest, the purely moral notion becomes transfigured into a magical 'something,'" says von Dobschutz.² It is as necessary in our own time as in any other age to insist that a true celebration of the Lord's Supper must be the outcome of an ethical understanding rather than of superstition and tradition. It avails us little to go through the practice habitually and automatically merely as the occasion arises.

The present trend towards liturgy and ritualism in the Evangelical churches, doubtless expresses a psychological need for religious help which recurs again and again at various stages of religious culture. But a real religious advance will be achieved only in so far as there is a spiritualization both

¹ P.A.Schilpp, "Do We Need a New Religion?" p.108.

² "Christian Life in the Primitive Church," p.21.

of the ideas of Christianity and of the ritualistic methods expressing it. Unfortunately progress in ritual has not always kept pace with progress in ideals. It is indeed surprising to find what crude survivals are to be found in even the most lofty of religions. Christianity is by no means an exception.

Professor Angus with true insight points out that ignorance of the antecedents of Christianity and of its contemporary spiritual forces and mentality, renders a true appreciation of it impossible.¹ It ought also be equally clear that without an intelligent understanding of the origin and history of our sacraments, we not only are in ignornace as to why we observe them but are in more serious danger of repeating the errors into which the church has fallen in the past. Ignorance and superstition in religion, as elsewhere, always go hand in hand. Indeed, we ought to know more than we do of the nature of the Eucharist, of that sacrament with which no other can compete, says Angus, "in the combination of simplicity and profundity; nor present in such vivid and dramatic way the essence of Jesus' self-sacrificing life and so unite us in 'the

¹ "The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World," p.ix.

fellowship of His sufferings."¹ But we cannot appreciate without knowing and understanding. There are those, however, such as Dean Inge, who are opposed to an examination of the nature and working of this sacrament. For example, the Dean asserts that "we should abstain from speculating on the effects of the sacraments and train ourselves to consider them as divinely-ordered symbols."² It is our conviction, however, that the best test of truth is that it will bear the light, and that the nearer we get to truth the nearer we get to God. Therefore, we should ask: What evidence is there for believing that the Eucharist is a 'divinely-ordered symbol'? Can we be quite certain that Jesus ordered it? In what form and sense are we to consider it as 'divinely-ordered'? Since honesty is itself a virtue we must face the historical evidence for the Lord's Supper as we find it—not as we should like to find it—and view it with open and unbiassed mind and then come to a conclusion as best we can. Such, indeed, is the purpose of this study.

¹ Op.cit., p.228.

² "Christian Mysticism," p.258. (This is the typical attitude of the sacramentarian).

C O N T E N T S

C H A P T E R I

S O U R C E S O F C H R I S T I A N
S A C R A M E N T A L I S M

1. THE GENERAL EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS OF RELIGION	1
2. JEWISH ANTECEDENTS	8
3. MYSTERY-RELIGIONS	13
(1) Orphism	22
(2) Osiris (Serapis) and Isis	25
(3) Magna Mater (Cybele) and Attis	27
(4) Dea Syria	31
(5) Mithraism	34

C H A P T E R II

T H E E U C H A R I S T
I N N E W T E S T A M E N T T I M E S

1. PAUL AND THE LORD'S SUPPER	42
2. SYNOPTIC TRADITION	63
3. THE EUCHARIST OF THE EARLY CHURCH	92
(1) The Agape	94

(2) Johannine teaching	98
(3) The Eucharist of the Didache	102
4. SUMMARY	106
5. BIBLIOGRAPHY	110

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C H A P T E R I

S O U R C E S O F C H R I S T I A N

S A C R A M E N T A L I S M

1. THE GENERAL EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS OF RELIGION

To know the origin of the rite of communion is to know the origin of religion itself. Every religion, to be a religion in the true sense of the word, feels the need for communion with its god. Sacramentalism is characteristic of all ethnic religions. A sacrament, in a general sense, simply meant communion with the deity. In primitive times when people believed that the gods subsisted on food as they themselves did, such things as meal, salt, bread, flesh, honey, milk, oil, wine and even blood, were used as elements of sacramental feasts. Sacramental communion is as old as religion, and is not something new nor wholly unique in Christianity. We can trace its beginnings from the days of fire worship. The Rig Veda, much older than any parts of the Old Testament, tells of the offering of the propitiating sacred cake of meal and butter on the sacrificial fire to Agni, and of the intoxicating divine beverage, the Soma, which bestowed immortality:

"The food round which all deities and mortals,
Calling it honey-mead, collect together." ¹

The juice of the plant was looked upon as being the king and divine generator of all plants. Therefore, the Indo-Iranian worshipper believed:

"We have drunk Soma and become immortal;
We have attained the light the gods discovered." ²

More essentially mystical communion with the deity was based on the notion that the actual presence of the god was resident in the food and drink of the meal. Just as to how and when this idea arose, many scholars give various answers. The problem is beyond the scope of our present study; it is enough to note that the cult of eating the god existed without doubt, from very ancient times. The bouphonia, or ox-murder, among the Greeks, the camel sacrifice of the Ancient Arabians who hastily devoured the living flesh of the victim, the Roman Ceres, the Egyptian animal-gods—the sacred bulls of Memphis and sacred rams at Thebes, are all outstanding examples of theophagy. Indeed, it has been a primitive and universal custom to eat the Corn-Spirit represented in human form. The Ainu of Japan repeated:

"O thou divine cereal, do thou nourish
the people. I now partake of thee. I worship
thee and give thanks." ²

¹ Book VIII, 48. Tr. by A. A. Macdonell.

² Ibid.

³ Frazer, "Golden Bough," vol. II., 4th. ed., p. 52.

The same rite is observable among the Reef Islanders of Melanesia, and others who partake of yam, rice and new corn sacramental meals. In Buru, Celebes, the act of eating the soul of the rice is carried out. Of peculiar interest is the ancient practice of the Aztecs, of eating sacramentally a dough (sometimes a real man) image of their god, Huitzilopchtli, which was broken in pieces, and solemnly eaten by his worshippers, believing that they ate the flesh and bones of the deity. The Aztecs even held a sort of doctrine of transubstantiation—before the arrival of Christian missionaries—believing their priests by consecrating the bread magically turned it into the very body of their god and when they partook of the sacred bread received the divine substance in mystic communion. At autumn time it was also customary to go through the rite of killing the god and then eating him afterward. As Frazer remarks, "neither the ancient Hindus, nor the ancient Mexicans had much to learn from the most refined mysteries of Catholic theology."¹ We know that the Brahmins offered in sacrifice rice-cakes which they believed had been actually turned into animals by their priests. The Satapatha-Brahman says:

"When it still consists of rice-meal, it is hair. When he pours water on it, it becomes skin. When he mixes it, it becomes flesh; for

¹ Op.cit., vol II, pp.86-90. See also further discussion and other illustrations.

then it becomes consistent; and consistent also is the flesh. When it is baked, it becomes bone; for then it becomes somewhat hard; and hard is the bone. And when he is about to take it off and sprinkles it with butter, he changes it into marrow. This is the completeness which they call the five-fold animal sacrifice."¹

In the cult of Dionysus, where the bull representing the god is torn in pieces and the raw flesh hastily eaten by his votaries, we have another indisputable instance of eating the god. Another relevant illustration for this present study is that of the mystic meal celebrated in the Syrian cult of Atargatis or Derceto, where sacred fish were both worshipped and eaten. The priests and initiates believed that they actually partook of the goddess when they ate her fish, since when she died she had been changed into a fish. When we realize how prominent the dove and fish symbols once were in Christianity, we cannot escape the inference that the dove and fish cult of the Syrian goddess, which appeared within the same geographic area and about the same period in history as did Christianity, must have had some influence upon the religion which later used the same pagan symbolism. Christian art within the catacombs is a witness to such borrowings. Christ, as we know, has been depicted as a fish. His divine sonship was represent-

¹ Sacred Books of the East, vol. xii. Tr. by J. Eggeling, Part I Oxford 1882, p. 51.

ed as being conveyed to him in the form of a dove.

Our main point, however, is clear. One of the ruling ideas of ancient religion was communion with the god, often going so far in some cases, to go through the ritual of eating the deity. The fullest measure of communion was thus attained by eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the divine. A few scholars, such as Gardner and Kennedy, believe that the worshippers simply shared the meal with their god. But we can hardly escape the conclusion that the theophagus practice also existed.¹ As a matter of fact, Christian church history furnishes the proof also for the belief. Justin Martyr, 153 A.D., thought he saw in the bread of the Eucharist the actual flesh of Christ.

"We have been taught that the food . . . is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh."²

We are also reminded of what Chrysostom said:

"We bury our teeth in His flesh. Our tongues are red with His most sacred blood."

The view of the Roman Catholic church today in its theory of transubstantiation, is nothing less than the primitive belief of eating the god.

¹ P. Gardner says we cannot trace in any of the most respectable forms of heathen religion a survival of the practice of eating the deity. But he does not deny its entire existence, however. See his "The Religious Experience of St. Paul," p. 121.

² Apol, I, 66; Ayer, p. 34.

It is well to note, also, in this connection a corresponding notion regarding the potency of perfection of the sacrificial offering, which not only underlay the worship of primitive peoples but also that of present-day sacramentalism. The belief of the Hebrew that the more perfect the sacrifice the more potent its effect, has also entered the Christian doctrine of the Atonement and permeates the Roman Catholic Mass. The current theology of the bulk of our Evangelical churches, is redolent with the same notion about Christ's death.

It is quite clear that the sacramental idea and practice of feeding on the body of the god are not peculiar to any one religion nor to Christianity itself. As to whether Paul and the author of the Fourth Gospel held these materialistic or semi-physical ideas of communion, we shall inquire later. But such scholars as Dieterich, Lietzmann and Heitmüller, believe that such beliefs about eating the god were current in the time of Paul and John. We need not believe, however, that they viewed the Christian sacrament in a crude and primitive and magical sense, but thought of it as having a more refined and less materialistic nature. Yet at the basis of all sacramentalism lies the notion of partaking of the divine nature by means of a meal. As Frazer and others

point out, the possibility is not far remote that the Christian Eucharist has been influenced by the cannabilistic rite of ancient times of eating the god.

Since the Lord's Supper has been regarded as a sacrifice by a vast number of Christians, both past and present, it should be noted that sacrifice has never developed to any great extent without a sacrificial meal, as Goguel points out.¹ Primitive man was not content with placating his god with gifts, nor simply to be on good terms with him by sharing a common meal, he also was desirous of obtaining the virtues of the object of his awe and worship. He, therefore, sought by magical means to imbibe the virtues of his god into his own system. Porphyry says:

"Those who wish to receive into themselves the soul of prophetic animals absorb their principal vital organs, such as the hearts of crows, moles or hawks, and thus they become able to speak oracles like a god."²

When the American Indians tortured to death the founder of the Huron Mission, Jean de Brebeuf, before he expired they laid open his breast, drank his blood and devoured his heart so as to obtain the courage which so over-awed them in their valiant enemy. Man has always sought to possess supernatural power. He has always striven to be divine, and pray God he will, but let us hope not in

¹ "L'Eucharistic," pp. 27 ff.

² De abstin., II, 48.

such barbarous fashion.

We may say, then, that there has been in the general evolution of religion, especially on the higher side of communion, a yearning for union with the deity and for a personal sharing in the life of the divine. On the lower side of sacrificial communion meals, superstition and magic have always prevailed, ethics and morality being almost entirely absent. Since Christianity spread chiefly among the superstitious and lower classes of the Hellenistic world, it certainly had ample opportunity to come under the influence of primitive survivals. And since it is a historical religion, Christianity has also been subject to the same laws of evolution and historical conditioning as all other religions. We need not be surprised, therefore, to find that many of the general ideas and practices that characterize the Christian Eucharist, arose as the result of the evolutionary process in religion. As a matter of fact our suspicion would be aroused if we found the Christian religion claiming exemption from the historical and genetic processes.

2. JEWISH ANTECEDENTS

We must never lose sight of the fact that the first Christians were Jews. Christianity itself, in its beginning, was an offshoot of Judaism—so much so that

it became Paul's great task to loose the chains which bound it to Jewish legalism and narrow nationalism. Those, then, who first participated in the Lord' Supper, thought and lived in the atmosphere of the Old Testament. A writer of one of the Gospels took great pains—and thereby colored the facts—to show that both Jesus and his teaching were fulfilments of Jewish prophecy and law. Matthew's additions to the Markan account of the Last Supper, were made, as we shall see, with such suppositions in mind.

The origin of the Lord's Supper lay, as J.V. Bartlett remarks, "in the facts familiar to the Jews, but unrealized by the Christians, namely, Sabbath meals and those on the feast days, including the Passover meal."¹ The fact of this is also borne out by early Christian art in the catacombs, which depicts the Last Supper as the Agape and as the eucharistic meal of the Didache, and not as the Pauline sacrament. We know also that Christianity got its rite of baptism from the same source as it got its communion meal, namely, from Judaism. It not only took over the sacred books of the Jews but also patterned its worship after that of the synagogue; in fact Christianity taught and worshipped in the synagogue until its founder and his immediate followers were driven out.

¹ Mansfield College Essays.

From earliest times the Hebrews consummated and symbolized agreements with a common meal.¹ The J document in Exodus says that Moses' seventy sheikhs "had a vision of God and ate and drank at their sacrifice."² J again in Genesis represents Jahveh as smelling the "soothing fragrance" of Noah's sacrifice.³ Because of its life-giving qualities, salt was a most important article for covenant ceremonies,⁴ in fact no sacrifice was complete without it.⁵ The partaking of any article of food in a meal by two or more parties, made an indissoluble bond which could not be broken. W.R.Smith remarks for the Hebrew: "But if I have eaten the smallest morsel of food with a man, I have nothing to fear from him."⁶ So also we seem to hear our modern Roman Catholic friend after Mass tell of his renewed relationship with Christ. A most remarkable example of the binding nature of the meal covenant among the Hebrews is found in the ninth chapter of Joshua, which gives an account of a fraud perpetrated on the Israelites by the Gibeonites, the latter claiming immunity under the sacredness of the meal which the Hebrews had unwittingly partaken of with them.

¹ See Gen.26:30; 31:54; 2 Sam.3:20. Note how Aaron and the elders eat bread 'before' Jahveh, Ex.18:12. Cf., also, the sacramental meal between Abraham and Melchizedek, Gen.14:18.
² Exodus 24:11 (Moffatt).
³ Chap.8:21.
⁴ Nu.18:19; 2 Chron.13:5.
⁵ Ezek.43:24; Lev.2:13; Mk 9:49. It was used in the Passover.
⁶ "The Religion of the Semites," p.270.

The practice of the blood covenant by the Israelites was perhaps the most significant bond and contract that they knew. According to the belief of the Semite, life resided in the blood and all blood, therefore, was taboo and sacred.¹ These notions governed all their blood covenants, blood libations to the deity and their blood-brotherhoods. Compacts by blood were ratified either by smearing each other with the blood of their own veins, or by dipping their hands into the gore of an animal sacrifice. The act of dipping the hands into a common dish in later times symbolized such a compact by blood.²

The whole question of blood covenants and blood atonement is too vast for us to enter into here. Yet these ancient Semitic practices have a very significant bearing on the problem of the Lord's Supper. The whole theory about Christ's atoning death had its origin in such Hebrew theology. An outstanding example of such influence on Christian theology is to be found in Moses' blood covenant recorded in Exodus 24:3-8 which tells of a compact ratified between Jahveh and his people by the sprinkling of blood over the people and over the altar (representing Jahveh). Those who have not, so we think,

¹ See Gen.9:4.

² Cf the significant action reported as taking place at the Last Supper, Mtt.26:23.

properly understood the life and death of Jesus, think that Jesus' shed blood is applied in a similar manner to all true believers. To the majority of those who hold this theory, the Lord's Supper is a representation of that atonement.

As William Robertson Smith says, "the notions of communion and atonement are bound up together."¹ This is also true with regard to the relationship of the Last Supper with the Passover in the thinking of the early Christians.² As we shall see later, the New Testament accounts of the last meal that Jesus had with his disciples, as they have come down to us, are highly impregnated with Old Testament conceptions about sacrificial atonement. We should remember, also, in this connection, that after the disappearance of the prophet as an outstanding figure in Judaism, the priestly ideas of mediation became regnant. This, too, had a far-reaching effect on conceptions of Christ's death and on the development of the doctrine of the Eucharist in Christian theology.

Thus, in the second place, we must take into account the Jewish antecedents of the Lord's Supper, to help explain its origin and interpret the evolution of

¹ "The Religion of the Semites," p.320.

² We should also remember that the feast of unleavened bread was associated with the Passover. Both rites probably had their origin in ancient Canaanitish agricultural practices, being based on a belief that the first-fruits, sacred to the deity, contained an indwelling of the god.

Christian sacramentalism. Inge says that "the Eucharist perpetuated the paschal meal and identified Christ with the paschal lamb."¹ In any event, the origin of the Lord's Supper had its rise in close connection with the Jewish Passover.

3. MYSTERY-RELIGIONS

While Jewish antecedents have a significant and influential bearing on the origin and early development of the Lord's Supper, yet a cursory examination of it shows that they do not fully account for all the phases and developments of the Christian Eucharist. We turn now to make a brief survey of the mystery-religions, taking notice of the similarities between mystery-religion and Christian sacramentalism. While we can hardly hold that the Eucharist came directly out of the mystery-religion cults, yet we cannot fail to notice their parallels with the Lord's Supper. There is, of course, some explanation for these striking similarities of which early Christian sacramentarians were so acutely conscious.

Christianity made its appearance at a period when old religious forms and practices had broken down in the Mediterranean world and another period of religious

¹"Contentio Veritatis," p.283

renaissance and syncretism had set in. Edwyn Bevan points out that

" . . . the traditions of primitive magic, the Dionysiac and Orphic and Pythagorean confraternities, continued to find votaries, and then when the city-state and its official religion, under the shadow of the Macedonian and Roman world-powers, ceased to satisfy the needs of the individual, all the rites over which hung some veil of mystery, existed a new attraction in a world ill at ease."¹

Alexander's ambition to wed the West and the East was being slowly realized. To a great extent, Sacramental Christianity was one of the products of such a union. Indeed, a whole brood of new religions was born, or at least a re-birth of old nature religions with their sacramental practices took place under new guises. The beginning of our era was a time, says Bousset,

"when, under the Roman conquests, ethnic cults were losing their national character, mutually modifying each other, and in the resulting religious confusion bringing up from the depths of the popular consciousness ancient and long dormant materialistic conceptions of deity. Old religious ideas and practices, washings, lustrations, anointings, sacramental eating and drinking, the use of holy names, mystic formulas and symbols surged up in the boiling medium from the bottom, and religion became a mere system of sacramental means."²

Not all scholars will agree that this is a correct picture of the religious environment in which Christianity was cradled. Grotin, for instance, believes that the

¹ "Hellenism and Christianity," p.74.

² "Hauptprobleme der Gnosis," p.277. Tr.by Grotin.

mystery-religions had no "influential existence in the first century."¹ Schweitzer, Harnack, Maurice Jones, Kennedy and others do not favour the belief that mystery-religion was the source of Christian sacramentalism. Some of these scholars are inclined to think that sacramental ideas had become too decadent to have much influence on the mind of the primitive church. Others, like Grotin, assert that Christian sacramentalism was born before the mystery-religions were widely diffused or had come to full development. Angus takes the middle of the way, and is more likely to be right, in saying that the mystery-religions were in their zenith when sacramental Christianity appeared. So little is actually known of these religions and their cult meals it is unwise to dogmatize either way, for their effect or non-effect on Christianity. While we should not jump too hastily to conclusions, yet it is necessary to respect the truth. It will do nothing but harm to argue for the negative on purely a priori grounds that the Eucharist could not be influenced by pagan sacramental meals. At least three points seem clear:

(1) Christianity arose in a mystery-religion world.

(2) Elements of these pagan cults did at some-

¹ "The Christian Eucharist," p.115.

time in the course of our era, became incorporated in Christian usage.

(3) Beginning with Paul there is a noticeable adoption of technical phraseology from mystery-religion to describe the Eucharist. This last point we shall discuss below when we seek to ascertain Paul's relationship with pagan religion.

The question largely at issue, so far as the influence of the mystery-religion on Christianity is concerned, is not so much the fact that syncretism has occurred—because the most conservative admits that it has taken place between Christianity and pagan religion—the clash of opinion is rather over the time of its occurrence. The older schools take a position like that held by R.A.Falconer who maintains that the Lord's Supper

"remained truly symbolic, until, after the first decade of the second century, the stream of Christian life, making its way through pagan soil that was saturated with ideas drained off from mystery practice and thought."¹

While this, of course, is largely true yet the evidence seems to show that the draining process began somewhat earlier than the second century. Doubtless the stream of influences was greater in the fourth and fifth centuries than in the first. But how early did it begin? We are

¹ "The Lord's Supper," art.DCG,II,p.71.

inclined to think that when the second stage of the Christian church, the Antiochene, was reached, when its center was transferred from Jerusalem to Antioch, giving the movement fresh force and expansion, borrowings and additions from the new environment could hardly be anything less than possible. Pfleiderer, indeed, may be near the truth in stating that Paul found the sacramental idea of the Lord's Supper already in existence at Antioch. We may at least say that it was entirely likely when the door of the church was opened at Antioch for Gentile converts—against the opposition of the Jerusalem leaders—the incoming proselytes brought mystery-religion conceptions of the sacraments with them. Such, then, perhaps, was the beginning of the syncretizing process, by a little opening of the door to the paganization influence which became such a powerful force in the life of the church a few generations later.

The Hellenization of Christianity was but another side of the same shield. Both Harnack and Schweitzer admit that the process had begun by 130 A.D. In reality it must have exercised its influence before this date. The East and the West began their interpenetration after the conquests of Alexander. Christianity certainly felt its effects

in some degree from the very beginning. The city of Alexandria is a classic example of the Hellenization process. Even before the appearance of Christianity the stage was set for its development along certain lines. It was here that "the twain did meet" in more ways than one. Here Greek philosophy synthesized with Jewish and oriental thought; here the Septuagint was made; here Philo re-interpreted Judaism in terms of Hellenistic philosophy; here gnosticism arose; here was the school of Clement, pupil and successor of Pantaenus; and here lived Origen (c 182-251) who made an allegorical interpretation of the Bible, conceiving Christ as a sacrifice and propitiatory offering and ransom. At all other important centers where Christianity took firm root, at Antioch, at Ephesus, at Corinth, at Rome, the same syncretistic process went on with determining effect upon Christian thought and practice.

That Christianity itself became a mystery-religion, though it did not arise as such, is generally agreed."It was as a mystery-religion," says Inge, "that Europe accepted Christ."¹ We have but to compare what we believe to have been the religion of Jesus with the sacramentarianism of today within the Christian church, to realize the significance of that statement. The

¹ Outspoken Essays, I, "St. Paul."

great difference between the religion of Jesus and 'Christianity' is pretty largely due to the influence of the pagan religions upon our faith and practice during its formative period. Angus pertinently remarks;

"The robes of the Mystery-priest were worn and the privileges of the Mystery-hierophant appropriated by the Christian priest. The pontiffs of the Mysteries anticipated the Christian hierarchy in seeking political power and in using religious associations for other than religious purposes."¹

On the other hand, however, the mystery-religions did good service for the spread of Christianity. They not only conquered and in turn helped Christianity conquer the West, but also, as Angus says, "fostered new and profound religious cravings and stirred up high hopes which Christianity alone could satisfy."² So it is that, in some respects, we need not be ashamed to acknowledge the effect of the pagan mysteries on the Christian religion. Not only was Christianity influenced by the mystery-religions, it became one, as we have stated above. Indeed, it seems to have been a very popular one, to account for its success. It accepted the down-trodden and humble adherents of other religions. It sought to keep the family together. It accepted both bond and free, and both male and female, as Paul asserted. To make its way in a world surcharged with religious mysticism, the Christian cult had to seek

¹ "The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World," pp.91 f.

² Ibid., p.85.

to satisfy the craving for the miraculous and stir the imagination. It, therefore, developed its sacraments, its institutions and its initiations. The Mystery-gods being primarily saviour-gods, initiation had to have a sacramental efficacy which would atone for a man's past sins and give comfort and hope for future immortality by his identification with his god. This made the mystery-religions very popular in the first Christian centuries. They brought the gods down to earth into intimate fellowship with the common man and met his needs. Their symbolism did for the common people what Greek philosophy did for the educated.¹

Judaism was not so very far from being like a mystery-religion. It was, we must remember, an oriental cult. It had its Messiah and Suffering Servant to bring salvation. It also had its sacrificial system and its redemption by the death of a victim. A martyr about the beginning of our era had cried to Jahveh:

"Be merciful unto thy people, and let our punishment be a satisfaction in their behalf. Make my blood their purification, and take my soul to ransom their souls."

There is very little evidence, however, to show that the Jews viewed their religion as a mystery. The Book of Daniel (c 165 B.C.) is the only place where the word is used and then without the significance of a cultus.²

¹ Angus, "The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World," p.81.

² See Chap.2:18 f; 28-30; 47. (LXX)

Extra-Biblical sources having the word are: Ecclesiasticus,¹ (c 180 B.C.), Tobit,² (170 B.C.), Judith,³ (150 B.C.), II Maccabees,⁴ (130 B.C.), and the Wisdom of Solomon,⁵ (c 50 B.C.). All of these uses of *μυστήριον* are of late Old Testament times. The Wisdom of Solomon, however, speaks of an initiation "into the knowledge of God."⁶ Philo (15-45 A.D.) views Moses and Jeremiah as receiving a similar initiation. Whatever of sacramental-mysticism Christianity derived from Jewish rites, had its rise largely in a pagan milieu, under Hellenistic influences.

Briefly, according to Anrich, the mysteries had three main characteristics: (1) Rites of purification; (2) Rites of communion; and (3) Provision for immortality. How naturally Christian sacramentarianism comes under these descriptive headings! Angus's depiction of the sacramental drama of the mystery-religion, applies equally as well to the Christian Eucharist. It

" . . . appealed primarily to the emotions and aimed at producing psychic and mystic effects by which the neophyte might experience the exaltation of a new life. . . a drama which . . . portrayed . . . the struggles, sufferings, and victory of a patron deity, the travail of nature in which life ultimately triumphs over death, and joy is born of pain."⁷

¹ Chap.22:22; 27:16 f.,21.

² Chap.12:7.

³ Chap.2:2.

⁴ Chap.13:21.

⁵ Chap.2:22; 6:22; 14:15,23. Verses 15 and 23 refer to the cult of the pagans.

⁶ Chap.8:4; 6:22; 7:7,14.

⁷ "The Mystery-Religion and Christianity," pp.58 f.

Let us now briefly but specifically glance at a few of the mystery-religions which made contacts with Christianity, for an examination of their sacred meals which have similarities to the Eucharist. As we have stated before, if striking likenesses exist we should not be ashamed of them but admit their existence. No one thinks of disqualifying science, medicine, astronomy, political science and social morality because they may have had magic, taboo and superstition for their ancestors. What we ought not to permit is jugglery, quackery and obscurantism to operate in the regulating of our modern life and affairs.

(1) Orphism.

The Orphic mysteries had by the sixth century B.C., taken root in Magna Graecia, in the Levant and on the Greek mainland. Proclus tells us that their influence was seen on every hand. Orphism had its societies, not unlike later Christian churches, its rites of initiation and purification, and its literature of divine inspiration. Its great emphasis on purity made it one of the greatest and most impressive Hellenic religions. Its doctrine of immortality very likely had an influence on Plato. He tells us that the mysteries promised escape from ills beyond death, and that they foretold an awful future for

the uninitiated. The corrupt man was supposed to be put off and a new man put on through the mysteries. Angus says that Orphism was steeped in sacramentalism which flooded later mysteries, salvation being by sacrament, by initiation and by hidden doctrine. "The Orphic movement," he says, "was the most potent and pervasive of the early syncretistic forces which reached their strength and heyday of the mysteries." Legge also says:

"That the Christians of the first centuries thought that in the Eucharist they united themselves to Christ by receiving his body and blood, there can be no question, and the dogma can have come as no novelty to those who, like the Orphites, had combined with Christianity the ideas which we see current among Orphics as to the sacramental efficacy of the homophagus feast and the eating of the quivering flesh of the sacrifice which represented Dionysus."¹

Dionysus and Demeter were two ancient vegetation deities associated with the Eleusinian mysteries. Herodotus² in the fourth century B.C., says that initiation into the mystery of the 'Mother Earth' goddess was very popular. Its prevalence and power are seen in the fact that Augustus was initiated 21 B.C., and again in 125 A.D., Hadrian took the first degree, in 129 A.D., the third degree. Herodotus also says that when Scylas, the Scythian king was initiated, the deity "took possession" of him, being *εὐθεός*, "full of God."³ The sacramental meal, the *κυκεών*, which Demeter

¹ "Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity," pp.171 f.

² VIII, 65.

³ IV, 78.

had taken after a nine-day mourning for her daughter, was made up of a gruel of barley-groats, water and penny-royal leaves rubbed fine. Aristotle said that the initiated "feel certain emotions and are put in a certain suitable frame of mind."

Dionysus, the associate of Demeter, was also the god of agriculture and corn, a dying and rising deity of vegetation. It is a curious fact that he was known as "He of the Winnowing-fan."¹ This was his emblem and used in his rites which represented his passion in every detail. "All that he had done or suffered in his last moments was enacted before the eyes of his worshippers who tore a live bull to pieces with their teeth."² To drink of his sacred wine meant a foretaste of the Elysian Fields.

Paul could scarcely be unacquainted with the Eleusinian mysteries since they were widely practiced; at Eleusius on the road from Corinth to Athens, at Corinth, at Antioch and at Ephesus—its headquarters in Asia. No distinction of race or sex was made for participation. Mabillon of the ninth century A.D., gives a very vivid description of the Roman ceremonies of baptism and Easter Mass with their blaze of lights, of the chalice for the newly-baptized being filled with milk and honey. In

¹ Compare this with the similar description of Christ in Mtt.3:12 and Lk.3:17.

² Frazer, "Golden Bough," I, Spirits of the Corn and the Wild, pp.14 f.

the Eucharist a lamb was offered on the altar, and afterwards cakes in the shape of a lamb were also offered.¹

Commenting on these celebrations Hatch remarks that all this

"was simply the ritual . . . seen . . . in the mysteries. The purified crowd at Eleusis saw a blaze of light, and in the light were represented in symbol life and death and resurrection."²

(2) Osiris (Serapis) and Isis.

We find this mystery cult in Egypt before the third century B.C. It virtually became the official sect of Hellenistic-Egypt in the time of Ptolemy I. It had penetrated Italy before 105 B.C., and so powerful and dangerous did it become that we find persecutions arising against it in 58 B.C., 53 and 4 B.C., and again in 19 A.D. A temple was erected in Rome 38 A.D. Indeed, the cult claimed universal allegiance along the Mediterranean coast. "In and about Levant, Isis and Serapis worship enjoyed an almost undisturbed prosperity for a period of three hundred years before Paul appeared on the scene," says Troupe.³ Angus observes that only redemptive cults such as this were in demand in the Graeco-Roman world.

The likeness of this mystery-religion to

¹ Com.praev.ad ord.Rom; Misaeum Ital.II, xcix.

² Hibbert Lectures, p.300.

³ "St.Paul and the Mystery Religions," p.33.

Christianity has been seen by most scholars and even by the ancients. Hadrian remarked that "those who worship Serapis are Christians, and those who call themselves bishops of Christ are vowed to Serapis." The Heraculaneum fresco represents the Adoration of the Sacred Water as the emblem of Osiris. "May Osiris give thee water of refreshment, may Isis grant thee the holy water of Osiris," was the prayer of the priest. Grotin admits that "it is the one cult which comes nearest to Christianity." He goes on to say:

"There are quite striking resemblances between the cult of Isis and contemporary Christian belief and practice. There are the fasts, the washings, the processions, the morning and evening worship, the division into catechumens and believers, the death and revival of Osiris, and the merciful and tender Isis, who is believed by some to be the pattern of Mary the Virgin as she was regarded in later centuries."¹

As we shall also see, the Table of the Lord Serapis, a suffering and resurrection drama, has a most striking parallel in the 'Lord's Table' of Paul's usage. The Egyptian funeral feast or refrigerium (refreshment) for the dead, was what Cumont called a pre-libation or banquet at which the elect feasted in the other world.² The Roman Catholic still prays for the spiritual refreshment of the dead. The Christian wake for the dead practiced

¹ "The Christian Eucharist and the Pagan Cults," p.185.

² "After Life in Roman Paganism," p.204.

within our own times, undoubtedly, had its origin in some such pagan practice.

(3) Magna Mater (Cybele) and Attis.

The cult of the Great Mother goes back to the very dawn of history. From Pessinus in Phrygia it spread westward. A temple was erected to her on the Palatine in 191 B.C., Marcus Junius Brutus celebrating the dedication thirteen years after the arrival of her stone image in Rome 204 B.C. Annually her cult was celebrated on the Tiber at the time of the Spring Equinox. Attis, Cybele's son, seems to have been another vegetation deity since he was viewed as a "reaped ear of corn."¹ Like other nature deities, Cybele and Attis, represented the birth and death of divine nature.

In several ways similarities to Christianity are noticeable. Ephesus, the place in which the Fourth Gospel originated, was considered the home of Magna Mater, being in the mountains at a place called Panagia Kapula, i.e., the virgin of the door. Tradition says that St. John brought the Holy Virgin to reside at Ephesus. What happened we may surmise. The two 'Virgins' finally became identified. Indeed, the Council of Ephesus in

¹ Hippolytus, Philos.V,1,8,9.

431 A.D., gave the title 'Mother of God'—that of Magna Mater—to the Virgin Mary.¹

The most significant rite of this mystery-religion, which was also related to Mithraism, was the bath in blood of the bull, known as the Taurobolium. As we read descriptions of this primitive sacrament, we are reminded of the horrible and barbaric idea regarding Christ's death that has entered popular Christian theology. How often have we heard evangelists admonish us to be 'washed in the blood of the Lamb.' Doubtless some of us have sung with a shudder Cowper's lines:

"There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins,
And sinners plunge beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains."

The paganistic source of such thinking is quite obvious when we become acquainted with the facts about the Attic blood bath. The prominence of blood in this cult and the Eucharist is quite characteristic. In the Lord's Supper we, of course, take an internal bath symbolically by drinking the wine. With the Roman Catholics the laity is denied even this, however, because of the high sanctity of the blood of Christ in the Mass.

¹ Some idea of the affection a votary held for the Great Mother is to be found in the words of Lucius: "Dulcem matris affectionem miserorum casibus tribuis." (As a loving mother bears a great affection to the adversities of the miserable). Apuleius, Met. XI, 25.

There is a great difference of opinion as to whether the taurobolium was widespread enough to influence Christianity at the beginning of our era. While the full strength of this practice was not reached in the west till the second and third centuries, evidence for a popular place in Italy and Gaul is not lacking. Plutarch says that the rite was brought to Rome in 67 B.C., by captive Cilician pirates.¹ The earliest dedication inscription yet discovered was made by a freedman of the Flavian period, 69-96 A.D. Statius c 80 A.D., makes a reference to the tauroktonous relief. We know also that soldiers of Nero, in his Parthian wars, brought the cult to Carnuntum on the Upper Danube A.D. 71. The rite was largely disseminated by the military and slaves, among whom it was very popular. Most of the monuments and inscriptions found in Britain belonged to military posts and encampments. In the age of Antonines, legati and tribuni militares were among the initiates. In the reign of Commodus, M. Valerius Maximianus, governor of Dacia, dedicated an offering to Sol invictus Mithras. As early as 160 A.D., according to a monument found at Lyons, the taurobolium was practiced in Gaul. George Foot Moore is probably right in thinking that the practice was in use as far west as this even before this date, for we know

¹ Pomp, 24.

that custom exists sometime before it is registered in art and stone. It is interesting to remember that Irenaeus was bishop of Lyons in 177 A.D.—but seventeen years after the taurobolium monument date. Another inscription at Naples in the reign of Hadrian 133 A.D., indicates the early rise and prevalence of the rite in Italy. In 376 A.D., Sextilius Ageillaus Aedesius dedicated an altar to the Great Mother with these words: "In aeternum renatus," being similar to the idea of reward in eternal life as in Christianity. It seems more than a coincidence that St. Peter's should have been built on a spot where the great sanctuary of Attis once stood. Not only so, the high priest of the Magna Mater was called 'papa' (pope) and he (the Attic papa) wore the tiara the emblem of priestly authority.¹

Besides this passion drama of death and resurrection, which guaranteed a "rebirth for eternity," there was a sacramental meal of eating and drinking, in which the communicants believed they became one with the Great Mother.

"Be ye of good cheer, ye mystae of the god who has been saved; to you likewise there shall come salvation from trouble."

From Clement of Alexandria we learn that the two vessels for communion with the mother-goddess, were the 'tympanum'

¹ Augustine tells us that a priest of Cybele kept asserting: "And even the god with the Phrygian cap (Attis) is a Christian." See further on this, Frazer, "Osiris, Attis, Adonis," 1907, pp. 256 ff.



Emblems of Christ from the Catacomb frescoes.

(To face page 31)

and the 'cymbalum.'

"I ate from the tympanum;
I drank from the cymbalum."¹

The close similarity of mystical communion to that in the early Christian Eucharist, is evidenced by the denunciatory words of Firinicus Maternus:

"It is another food that gives salvation and life. Seek the bread of Christ and the cup of Christ."

(4) Dea Syria.

The Syrian goddess Atargatis, or Derceto, was another such fertility and nature deity. Lucius Apuleius called her the mistress and mother of all living things. The prominence of the fish symbol in her cult like that in early Christian art, is strikingly similar. The fresco art of the catacombs², such as we find in the crypt of St. Cornelius, points to the prevalence of a mystic fish meal among the second century Christians. The practice was later confined to Fridays and the Lenten period, such as is observed by the Roman Catholic and Eastern churches today.

Inscriptions have been found in Phrygia by Ramsay, 1881, which dated as far back as 216 A.D. An epitaph on the tomb of Abercuis, a priest of Hieropolis

¹ Protrepticus II, 14.

² See drawings on opposite page.

c 180 A.D., gives significant expression to Christian thinking in the second century.

"In company with Paul I followed, while everywhere Faith led the way, and set before me for food the Fish from the fountain mighty and stainless (whom a pure virgin grasped), and gave this to friends to eat always, having good wine, and giving the mixed cup with bread."¹

Found at Autun, France, in 1839, is another inscription, of about the same date as the one just quoted, commemorating an unknown Pectorus, and tells of a celestial offspring of the Divine Fish!

"Celestial offspring of the Divine Fish, fortify thy heart, since thou hast received in the midst of mortals the immortal source of divine love. Friend, rejoice thy soul with the water that ever gushes forth from the wisdom that gives treasures. Receive this sweet sustenance as the honey of the Saviour of the saints; eat with delight, holding the Fish in thy hands."²

This mighty and stainless fish once enclosed by a pure virgin, can be no other than Christ. The imagery identifying Jesus with a fish must, almost to a certainty, have come from the cult of the Syrian goddess. Both Origin and Augustine allude to the fact that Christ was called a fish. The latter in speaking of the Eucharist calls it "the solemn feast in which is shown that Fish whom the faithful on earth eat when taken out of the deep."³ Paulinus of Nola said: "He (Christ) is the true

¹ Tr. by Lightfoot, Apostolic Fathers, Vol. I, part ii. p. 480.

² Quoted from Barnes, The Early Church in the Light of the Monuments (1913), p. 133.

³ Confessions, XIII, 23.

bread, and the fish of the living water." Tertullian referred to the Christians as "little fishes (pisciuli) who after the example of an ΙΧΘΥΣ Jesus Christ, are born in water."¹ In the Middle Ages there was a fish known by the name of the 'Paschal pickerel.' A tradition also has it that Christ used a fish instead of a lamb at the Last Supper. Dean Stanley also held to the belief that a fish was eaten with the bread and wine by our Lord and his disciples.²

The prominence of the fish symbol in early Christianity may have been in part due to the Gospel stories about fish, and its use by our Lord in the common meal. Yet we must confess that some other influence must have been at work in the mind of the early Christians to account for the notion that Jesus was a divine fish. Christians in and about Syria must certainly have been cognizant of the fact that the great goddess of Syria was not only looked upon as a divine fish, but that her priests and votaries believed they partook of her divine nature when they ate the sacred fish at Hieropolis. She was, indeed, a Semitic deity herself. Pilgrims from all parts of the Semitic world flocked to her great temple at Hieropolis, the center of her cult. Lucian, who lived in the third century of our era, says that he knew of

¹ De Baptism, I.

² Not also that $\text{ΙΧΘΥΣ} = \text{Ιησους, Χριστος, Θεου, Υιος, Σωτηρ}$

no greater city than Hieropolis and of no holier temple than that belonging to Atargatis, whose wooden obelisks reached three hundred fathoms in height! At the time of our Lord, Syrian merchants were carrying the cult to all the Latin countries. Syrian soldiers in the Roman armies widely diffused it, even into the North of England. Dea Syria could claim such notables as Marius and Aurelian for adherents. Ctesias as far back as 400 B.C., knew of Derceto. She became very popular among the poor, the slaves and among the military.

(5) Mithraism.

This mystery-religion came out of the religious world of Persia which had already "given to Judaism the doctrines of resurrection and judgment which were planted deep in Christianity."¹ Mithra or Mitra was distantly related to Varuna a sky god. Plutarch says that the Persians gave him the name of mediator. Speaking of Mitra's sacred meal, he says:

"They bruise a kind of grass called $\mu\omega\lambda\upsilon$ (haoma) in a trough, . . then mixing it with blood of a slaughtered wolf they carry it to a sunless place and throw it away."²

¹ "Phases of Early Christianity," p.226.

² De Iside e Osiride, Ch.46. Tr.by Geden. Justin notes (Apol. I,66) that the mystical drink had been derived from the hoama drink of the Vedas.

The rites of the Dying God, Mithras, did not reach Rome until about the latter part of the first century A.D., although "it was flourishing in Commagene and Cilicia as early as the campaigns of Pompeius, 67 B.C."¹ Mithras as Redeemer God was identified with the bull which he sacrificed to the Sun. This eucharistic sacrifice of the Mithraic bull took the form of the taurobolium. The close connection of this bloody bath with the Phrygian cult, Magna Mater, has been noted above.² Prudentius (348-410) has left us a very vivid description of the taurobolium. The animal was slain on a platform over an excavation, while the warm blood splashed the initiate who stood below.

"Through the thousand crevices in the wood, the bloody dew runs down into the pit. The neophyte receives the falling drops on his head, clothes and body. He leans backward to have his cheeks, his ears, and his nostrils wetted; he pours the liquid over his eyes, and does not spare even his palate, for he moistens his tongue with blood and drinks it eagerly."³

It is now common knowledge that Mithraism and Christianity once engaged in a bitter struggle for supremacy in the Mediterranean world. Their similarities were largely the cause of the strife. Doubtless both influenced and imitated each other. Both had their doctrines of sin, redemption, sacramental grace, and salvation for ever-

¹ Gilbert Murray in Peake's Commentary, p. 632.

² P. 28.

³ Quoted from Cumont, "The Oriental Religions, etc.," p. 66.

lasting life. Julian went so far as to say that if Mithras' injunctions were followed the devotee would find everlasting bliss.¹ Mithraism promised salvation for both body and soul in the sacramental meal. It is rather peculiar that Christian apologists should deny the possibility of Christianity being indebted to Mithraism for sacramentalism—indeed, they argue vice versa—when there is indubitable evidence for borrowings in other cases. Two of the greatest and most sacred days of Christianity, namely Christmas day and Sunday, were taken from Mithraism. "In the fourth century Christmas was placed on the 25th of December because on that date was celebrated the birth of the sun (Natalis Invicti).² This was the birthday of Mithras! The first day of the week, dedicated to the Sun, our 'Sunday,' Day of the Sun, was Mithras' holy day, as opposed to the Jewish Sabbath.³ Mithraism, also, had its story of a flood, a resurrection of the dead, and a doctrine of a final conflagration of the universe. No wonder, then, that early Christian apologists attacked the Mithraic cult.

Like that of the Christians, the sacramental meal of the Mithrae commemorated the supper which their

¹ Convivium, c.336.

² Cumont, "The Oriental Religions," etc., p.xvii.

³ Gilbert Murray, Peake's Commentary, p.632.

founder had eaten with his friend the Sun (Helios), after Mithras' saving work on earth. A bas-relief discovered at Konjica, Bosnia, represents the communion meal. Cumont describes it as follows:

"Before two persons stretched upon a couch covered with pillows is placed a tripod bearing four tiny loaves of bread, each marked with a cross. Around them are grouped the initiates of the different orders, and one of them, the Persian, presents to the two a drinking-horn; whilst a second vessel is held in the hands of one of the participants. These love feasts are evidently the ritual commemoration of the banquet which Mithra celebrated with the Sun before his ascension. From this mystical banquet, and especially from the imbibing of the sacred wine, supernatural effects were expected. . . it communicated to the neophyte the power to combat the malignant spirits, and what is more, conferred upon him as upon his god a glorious immortality."¹

The African writer Apuleius c 125 A.D., speaks of his initiation by the high priest of Isis, Mithras, in this way:

"The third day was likewise celebrated with ceremonies, with a religious dinner (ritu celebratus)."²

Tertullian tells us that the Mithraic soldier when taking his oath of fidelity, was branded on the forehead with a sign. This sign, judging by that seen on the communion bread, was none other than the sign of the cross. If so, it was likely the ordeal of fire referred to by Nonnus the commentator of Gregory of Nazianzen who himself spoke

¹ "The Mysteries of Mithra," p.160. See p.159 for a plate of the bas-relief.

² Met.xi,22-25.

of the 'tortures' endured by the initiates of Mithras.

The philosopher Proclus (412-285 A.D.) speaking of the mountain caves and underground crypts where the Mithrae celebrated their rites, in his commentary on the Timaeus, says:

"The barbarians call this life-giving source the well of life. . . They give to bowls the name of wells. . . This bowl, therefore, is a bowl of living water: for it is the source of souls."¹

Julian says that the meal was held annually at the end of the year and was called "The Feast of the Invisible Sun." The beautiful language of Claudian c 400 A.D., gives us another not altogether unattractive picture of the ritual:

"Fragrant with clouds of incense and with sheaves of Sabeian corn the altars ensure peace."
"The king himself with his right hand tips the gleaming bowl."²

A touching prayer for a son, found in a magical papyrus of the fourth century, gives us a glimpse of what believers expected from their sacraments.

"For my son I beg the gift of immortality, ye ministers of this our great potency. Thou, therefore, O daughter, shouldest take the juice of herbs and of spices which are in thy care in the rite of thy holy office. For in this the great sun-god Mithra bade me by his archangel take part, that I . . . may rise to heaven and have insight into all things."³

¹ Cf. the Johannine thought of Christ as a well of living water which gives everlasting life to the partaker.

² De Consulti, Bk. I, 58 ff.

³ In the British Museum. Tertullian notes that Mithraism brought the 'imago resurrectionis' into the communion rite.

From Porphyry (c 232-300 c A.D.) of Tyre we learn that honey was used for purification in Mithraism as in Christianity.

"The tongue also is purified from all sin by honey. And when honey is so offered to the Persian (the fifth grade of initiation) as the guardian of the fruits, its preservative virtue is symbolically expressed."¹

The Marcionite Christians, also, gave their neophytes a drink of milk and honey.

Another parallel with Christian thought is found in the title given Mithras, the "God of the Rock." The belief held, as his monuments show, that their deity was born from a rock. The Hebrews had also given the name 'Rock' to Jahveh. The early Christians said that Jesus declared that his church was to be built on a 'rock'.² Paul calls Christ a rock.³ We are all familiar with the hymn which speaks of Christ as "the solid rock." The parallelism was so noticeable to the early Christians that we find Firmicus Maternus protesting in his tract to Constantius and Constans:

"Why do you shame your profession by transferring this sacred name to heathen rites? . . . under the figure of the sacred stone that Christ is represented to us."⁴

Justin Martyr's bitter attack on Mithraism, c 153 A.D., speaks volumes of its likeness to his own religion.

¹ Tr.by Geden. There were seven stages of mystical initiation.

² Mtt.16:18.

³ Roman.9:33. Cf.I Pet.2:8 and I Cor.10:4.

⁴ De Errone Profan.Religionum,Chs.IV and XX.

"The wicked demons have imitated this (the Mithraic sacrament) in the mysteries of Mithra, commanding the same thing to be done. For that bread and a cup of water are placed before the initiate with certain incantations in these mysteries, you either know or can learn."¹

There must have been many charges and counter charges made by these two rival religions, of which we know nothing. Persecutions, also, went to violent extremes as the ruined Mithraea or chapels choked with skeletons, mutely testify. Between 306-439 A.D., some Christians at Alexandria tried to desecrate and destroy a Mithraic shrine, but the infuriated votaries retaliated by crucifying the attackers.²

This brief sketch of the sacramental nature of the great contemporary mystery-religions of early Christianity, may help us to realize something of the environment into which our sacraments came. The many similarities between the Eucharist and the cult meals of other contemporary religions, certainly indicate that the Lord's Supper was not a unique and independent rite wholly separate from all other religious practices. As to the extent that the Eucharist was influenced by other communion meals of its day, no definite answer can be given. It was a product of its time and largely a product of all that it had met. But

¹ Apol. I, 66.

² Ecclesiastical History of Socrates, Bk. III, 2, 3.

this does not mean that the Christian sacraments were nothing more than the children of blind circumstance. Nothing walks with aimless feet. While borrowing, assimilation and syncretism took place, an inner spirit within the Christian movement selected and adopted that which better expressed its genius. For example, the expulsion of the Gnostic heresy was an expulsion of a poison which the early church had taken into its system. The Lord's Supper was not entirely a victim of circumstance.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Literature</u>
15-45	Philo.
40-60	Logia (Q) from Palestine.
51	I and II Thessalonians.
54	Galatians.
55	I and II Corinthians.(From Ephesus).
54-56	Ephesians,Colossians,Philemon,Philippians.
65-70	Mark.(From Rome).
75-85	Luke.(From Corinth).
80	Matthew.(From Antioch).
93-97	Clement of Rome.
90	Acts.
75-100	Josephus.
80-100	I Timothy,II Timothy and Titus.
90-100	Hebrews and James.
100 p	Johannine literature.
115 c	Epistles of Ignatius.
115-140	Hermas.
120-160	Didache.
-165	Justin Martyr.
125-	Jude.(Antioch).
135-160	Gnosticism at its height.
150 c	II Peter and Apocalypse of Peter.
160-170	II Clement.
160-200 c	Irenaeus.
190-203	Clement.

C H A P T E R I I

T H E E U C H A R I S T I N N E W T E S T A M E N T T I M E S

I. PAUL AND THE LORD'S SUPPER.

One of the most vexing problems of Christian origins is to discover precisely the part that Paul played in the development of the Eucharist. Seeing that his account is the earliest that we possess of the Lord's Supper, we shall first of all inquire into the Pauline conception.

The theory put forward by some that the Apostle to the Gentiles borrowed the sacramental idea from the mystery-religions and introduced it into Christianity, does not meet with the unanimous approval of scholars. Without doubt Paul gave the Lord's Supper a significance which was so emphasized later that the Eucharist became the center of the Church's worship. When the Jewish ritual system was annulled at the destruction of the Temple a Christian ritual arose as a consequence with the Eucharist at its center.

To understand Paul's Christian background and the early church itself, a careful study should be made of the community at Antioch where men and women were first called 'Christians.' We have already noted the Antiochene stage of development in the life of the primitive church. In this new habitat, as Lake believes, the Judean Christian church had to dovetail itself into the thought and practice of a pagan environment. Petro-Pauline liberalism, though partly divided itself, more easily adapted itself to the new milieu, than did the conservative and more Judaistic element represented by the Logia (Q) and the Didache. The Gospel of Matthew attempted to unite both forces, from a Hebrew point of view.

Paul, on the other hand, tried to unify the Jewish and the Gentile points of view. It is in this effort that he introduces his emphasis on the death of Christ as the promise of our resurrection and the guarantee of man's renewed spiritual life. Since the cross was so central an element in his thinking and experience, the Lord's Supper would most certainly receive a sacramental interpretation. So, then, very early, the Lord's Supper underwent a two-fold develop-

ment, North-Syrian or Petrine and Pauline or Hellenistic, according as the liturgical or the social character of it came to predominate.

First of all, what was it that Paul "received from the Lord?" We must remember that but for the abuses of the Supper at Corinth, we should not have this record of the Eucharist from the pen of Paul.¹ It is rather unique that our very earliest record arose in this way.

We notice that Paul is the only one who claims (twice) that Jesus gave any command for a perpetuation of the Last Supper. But why are the Synoptic accounts silent on this vital and important point? The possibility immediately suggests itself to the mind that Jesus may never have given any order that the church was to repeat the meal. Someone has pertinently said that Matthew and Mark would never have dared to omit such words of command had they been spoken by Jesus. Justin Martyr (c 155) says:

"The apostles in memoirs produced by them which are called Gospels, related that when Jesus had taken bread and given thanks, he commanded them and said: 'Do this in remembrance of me.'"²

Justin, however, is simply quoting Pauline tradition.

¹ Note that Clement had also to urge order and reverence, "blamelessly and holily," at Corinth, a short while after Paul.

² Apol. I, 65.

Box is inclined to believe that Paul is in turn quoting a liturgical form already existing in stereotyped language unlike his own.¹ There is a great difference of opinion among scholars as to whether Paul is recording an exact quotation from Jesus or not.² Let us note in passing that Paul's own quotations from the Old Testament are not always accurate. We must at least remember this, that Paul's words are quite early, being only twenty-five years later than the actual original supper. Also, we note that the words are very concise and definite.

ἐγὼ γὰρ παρέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου ³

Moffatt translates:

"I passed on to you what I received from the Lord himself."

Goodspeed renders the passage as follows:

"For I myself received from the Lord the account that I passed on to you."

E.F.Scott believes that Jesus did not expect the meal to be repeated and that the command is simply a later addition, "supplying a want which may have caused misgivings."⁴ It is interesting to note that when Paul mentions other instructions received from Jesus, he is very careful to distinguish his own judgments from

¹ Jth.Stud, April 1902.

² Against are: Paulus, Abbott, Gardner, Grafe, Julicher, Pfleiderer, Spitta, B.Weiss, Wittichen, Luther, Schmiedal, etc. For its authenticity are: Holtzmann, von Dobschutz, Wendt, Weizsacker, Harnack, etc.

³ I Cor. 11:23. Cf. also I Cor. 15:13.

⁴ "The Beginning of the Christian Church," p.220.

directions coming from the Lord. With regard to such regulations governing the preaching of the Gospel,¹ it is clear that they refer to teaching contained within the Synoptic Gospels.

Paul's teaching to the Thessalonians declaring that the Lord was to appear in their life-time, was simply an idea taken from current apocalypticism, or was purely his own belief on the matter. His apocalyptic views had a very important bearing on his thinking about the celebration of the Lord's Supper. "Until he come," was his injunction. On the whole, it seems best to conclude, that Paul ascertained the mind of Jesus largely through the tradition of the church. If his report about Jesus' command is strictly verbatim, then the Synoptists are manifestly in error for they report the Last Supper differently. This is clearly obvious with respect to the differences concerning the cup and the blood. But we have no reason to believe that Paul is any more reliable than the Gospel accounts. Conybeare says that Paul's claim for direct reception does not rest on any basis of fact.² There is at least a nucleus of real tradition behind the Apostle's account, which has been expanded

¹ I Cor. 9:14. Cf. 7:25.

² "Myth, Magic and Morals," p. 151.

by Pauline fantasy.

This raises the question as to whether he meant to say that he had received the command by ecstatic revelation. P.C.Gardner thinks that this was the method of his reception. Both he and Friedlander conclude that Paul was the author of the rite, having "turned a pagan ceremony to Christian use in a moment of ecstasy under the influence of what he had seen of the Greek mysteries in Corinth." Arthur Drews, of course, would agree with this. Loisy believes the whole narrative is due to Paul, and that the only basis of it lies in the supper held at Bethany, where Jesus promised that his disciples should share in his Messianic feast. Loisy also claims that the principle of salvation in Paul's gospel is faith in redemption, in a myth of sacrifice, and in the perpetual efficacy of a divine death. Goguel and Heitmuller both agree, also, that Paul introduced the rite into Christianity.

With these extreme views we need not agree. That Paul did not originate the rite is indicated by the fact that there is quite another account of the Lord' Supper, in the Markan tradition. Reitzenstein, Heitmuller and Bousset consider Paul's sacramentalism

to be a kind of Jewish prophetism modified by the influence of Hellenistic mystery beliefs. Jackson and Lake agree for a synthesis with a Graeco-Oriental cult. It may be that Paul added to the awesome and symbolic Christian-Jewish meal, something of the mystery and ecstasy of contemporary cults which the Christian meal lacked. Knowling, Weizsacker, Holtzmann, Wendt and von Dobschutz properly suggest that Paul might not have been able to force a celebration on the Christian church apart from the historical facts and the usage and sanction of the Twelve. We are not so certain that Paul would not give forth something which common tradition might contradict. We remember that he exercised a great deal of independence in some other matters, such as his right to apostolic authority. We know also that he was a person given to ecstasy and trance.¹ On the other hand, we know that he did not altogether depend on such revelations.² J.Weiss, Moulton and Ramsay hold that Paul knew Jesus in the flesh. A great number of scholars, such as A.T.Robertson, Harnack, Pfleiderer, J.Weiss, Wellhausen, etc., are satisfied that on the whole Paul does not contradict the Gospel of Jesus, and that he understood him in the main. There were, however, certain

¹ See II Cor.12:10. Such ecstasies were characteristic of the mysteries. Cf.also Gal.1:12; 2:2; Eph.3:3.

² Cf.I Cor.13.

aspects of Jesus teaching, such as the Kingdom of God, which Paul fails to emphasize to the extent that his Lord did.

It is safer to assume that Paul was more the representative of common tradition about the Lord's Supper, rather than the author of it. The practice of "breaking bread," which obtained before Paul had become a Christian, indicates that a rite of some sort was in existence before Paul appears.¹ So that the Apostle is not announcing something entirely new. His language to the Corinthian Christians shows that they were already familiar with the Supper. The important thing to remember, however, is that the new and perhaps peculiar interpretation which Paul gave to the meal, gave a new direction to Christian thought and practice. B. Bacon believes that Paul re-enacted or dramatized the narrative about the Last Supper. Warschauer traces the alien element of a sacramental conception of the Eucharist to Paul entirely, since the identification of body and blood with bread and wine is, he thinks, utterly unlike any of the thoughts that Jesus was in the habit of expressing.

What, then, was Paul's conception of the

¹ It ought to be borne in mind, however, that the Lukan account in Acts was written much later than Paul's letters to the Corinthians.

Lord's Supper? Did he hold a sacramental view of the Eucharist? What, for example, was his opinion regarding participation at the tables of other cults? As Conybeare points out, he seems to be ambiguous in his language on the question. In one case those who brought gifts to the altars of devils imparted to them a magical or devilish virtue, and no one could eat at the table of the demons ~~without~~ impunity.¹ On the other hand, however, the Corinthian Christians might eat with immunity meat sold in the markets, that had already been on the altars of heathen cults.² Because of his inconsistency we cannot definitely prove whether Paul held magical views about such sacred meals or not. Case believes that Paul believed that whoever ate at the table of any deity thereby partook of the deity's substance. Hence he warns his fellow Christians. A.H. MacNeile, on the other hand, thinks that Paul did not share popular ideas about the sacraments, but that he gave prohibitions for the weak Christians who were likely to believe in demonic pollution.³ At any rate it looks as if Paul believed in the existence of demons. The whole of life was peopled with them for the ancients. For example, Porphyry

1 I Cor. 10:19-22. Pseudo-Clement, commenting on verse 20, forbids eating such meals for fear of becoming partners with demons. "But if any one that is not initiated conceal himself, and partake of the same, he eats eternal judgment . . . and to his own punishment." Chap. XXI.

2 I Cor. 10:25-29. Cf. Nu. 5:27-31. (Drinking purjury).

3 "Paul." 1920.

speaking about abstinence, thought that the gaseous rumblings of the stomach were caused by foul spirits introduced into the meat diet. The same writer believed that devils came and sat close to the bodies of the communicants while they ate at pagan suppers.

"Most of all, they (the demons) delight in blood and in impure meats, and enjoy these by entering into those who use them."

The Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions have a similar passage on demon-communion.

"Those whom the pagans call gods, or taste meats sacrificed to them, are guests of demons whose aspect they have fashioned in their minds, whether from fear or love."¹

Not only is it likely that Paul held similar beliefs of demon communion, but also thought that dire results, even death, ensued from improper practices. He alludes, for example, to the Old Testament episode where twenty-three (actually twenty-four!) thousand Israelites were smitten with a deadly plague for eating sacrifices offered to Chemosh. Paul not only expresses a sacramental belief regarding the Lord's Supper, but also a magical view concerning it. He believes that both sickness and death follow if the sacred emblems of the Lord's Supper are eaten irreverently.

"For he who eats and drinks without a proper sense of the Body, eats and drinks

¹ ii, 71.

to his own condemnation. That is why many of you are ill and infirm, and a number even dead."¹

Clemen argues that because I Cor.15:50 has not a sacramental meaning, other passages, such as 10:16, have not either. But we have noticed that his language is ambiguous and indicates conflicting views. This is probably due to the subject and objective aspects of his belief, the spiritual and sacramental, which he tries to unite and harmonize.

If Paul, then, conceived it possible to partake of the evil nature of the demon in a heathen cult meal,² we may infer that he held a corresponding belief about the Lord's Table. That is, Paul probably believed in the Presence in the Supper. Holtzmann, for example, holds Paul thought of Christ as being present as a guest. Much depends on what Paul meant by discerning the Body in the Supper.³ We should bear in mind, as we noticed above, Paul has made but an accidental or incidental allusion to the nature of the supper, and not a carefully worded dissertation for twentieth century scholars.

The apocalyptic passage, "proclaiming the

¹ I Cor.11:29 f.

² Paul likely knew of Deutero-Isaiah's 'table of devils,' 65:11 (LXX).

³ Op.,cit.

the Lord's death until he come,"¹ seems to indicate that the Lord's Supper is a sacramental rehearsal or repetition of Christ's death.² Was it simply a commemoration until his coming or was it a sacrificial representation of his death?³ Reitzenstein believes that Paul got the suggestion of this sacramental idea from the cult of Osiris where his blood is represented as a love potion, capable of producing a spell upon those who partake of it. But it is clear in many instances that Paul has no use for but rather an abhorrence of idolatry. Nevertheless, the power of suggestion is more strong than we are conscious of. Without doubt the Supper had manifold significance for Paul. It was not only a spiritual fellowship, it also symbolized the spiritual unity of all believers in Christ.⁴ It was also a memorial of the Lord's sacrificial death, denoting something wrought 'in' us *Koinonia* (communion), as well as something wrought 'for' us. While, as Glover says, Paul's identification of the Supper with Christ is always associated with ethics and duty,⁵ yet we must confess that the Apostle's language is somewhat that of the sacrament-

¹ I Cor. 11:26.

² "We celebrate this representation, as Himself (Jesus) appointed us, to show forth his death." Pseudo-Clement, XXV.

³ Heitmüller, Spitta, Reville, etc., maintain that Paul was the first to connect Christ's death with the Eucharist.

⁴ I Cor. 10:17.

⁵ "Paul of Tarsus," p. 213.

alist—certainly Paul's thought and language are much more sacramentarian than we know Jesus' to be. Deissmann points out that to Paul the cause of communion with Christ is not in the Supper, but consisting rather in a "peculiarly intimate contact with the Lord."¹ While Deissmann thinks that Paul did not hold a magical view of the Eucharist, yet that "peculiarly intimate contact" through the Supper may cover a large area of sacramentalism.² Angus's distinction that Paul's view is ethical-mystical rather than physical-magical, is, perhaps, to the point. While, as von Dobschutz says, that Paul's sacramental idea was of 'practically' no account, still what there was of it certainly had the most far-reaching effect in the Christian church. It might be safely said that Paul inserted the thin edge of the sacramental wedge. Conybeare holds that Paul, and no one else, seems to have started the idea that Christ's death was a genuine atoning sacrifice. A tendency is no less powerful because it is germinal or invisible. Dobschutz says that 'in certain passages the language he (Paul) employs can be understood to indicate purely sacramental operation of the meal of

¹ "Paul," p.145. Cf. I Cor. 10:16.

² Cf. I Cor. 10:1-12.

bread and wine, and at a later date actually had this construction placed upon it.¹ Indeed, Paul clearly identifies Christ with the Passover sacrifice: "For you are free from the old leaven; Christ our paschal lamb has been sacrificed."²

Where did Paul get these sacramental ideas? In a general way he got them where the Christian church obtained hers: through the nature of religion itself; from Judaism; and from surrounding religions—namely the mystery cults. No man's religious beliefs and practices can be understood apart from his inheritance and his environment.

Paul's relation to the mystery-religions deserves a fuller treatment than is possible within the compass of this brief study. But we may note a few matters that are relevant to the subject of the Lord's Supper. In the first place, Paul most certainly uses the technical vocabulary of contemporary pagan mystery-religions. Most authorities in the field of comparative religion admit that when this sort of likeness appears, borrowing has occurred. But what other language could Paul use that his converts would understand? It was from Ephesus that Paul wrote his

¹ "Christian Life in the Primitive Church," p.21.

² I Cor.5:7.

account of the Supper.

Scholars are much divided in opinion as to whether mystery-religion was influential enough in the first century to affect Paul. Schweitzer and Clemen, for example, say that it was widespread, while Reitzenstein and Dietrich take an affirmative position. It is, however, hard to escape the evidence that there was ample opportunity for influence and suggestion to do their work upon Paul's thought wherever he moved in the Mediterranean world. We remember that he speaks of his debt both to Greek and barbarian, and that he was willing to be all things to all men (within limits, of course) that he might win some. "From henceforth," he was once forced to decide, "I go to the Gentiles." These decisions and compromises had their effect on Christianity, also, mainly for the good, but not always. This syncretizing process was to bear fruit later. Others forwarded and strengthened the same tendencies to their logical and inevitable conclusions, until we find Christian apologists in the fourth century denouncing the pagan cults for their similarities to Christianity!

Significant in Paul's language is his use of the term *μυστήριον* (mystery). Evidently this usage had many purposes for Paul. In the main he confines it to revelation and not particularly to cult, although both may be related. The Christian knows all mysteries.¹ God's purpose is a mystery.² Very often the term is used with eschatological meaning.³ He uses the language of the mysteries to describe his own mystical experience. The Gospel itself is a mystery.⁴ The expression 'mysterion' is used no less than twenty-one times in the Pauline epistles.⁵ We notice, also, the use of the word *τελειουν* (initiate) several times. Paul speaks of the *μυστήριον* (secret) imparted in the mysteries; of *φωτισμὸς* (illumination) from secret rites; and also calls himself an *ὀικονομὸς*, a colleague or dispenser of divine mysteries. Gardner concludes that Paul's Christianity is impressed and deeply impressed by the mystery cults. But this does not prove that Paul changed Christianity into a mystery-religion, the evidence for which, Angus says, is wholly lacking.⁶ Angus does admit, however, that Paul's "mystical significance of the sacraments easily declined into magical or semi-magical physical operations." This

¹ I Cor.13:2.

² Eph.3:1; 16:19; Col.1:26, etc.

³ Rom.11:25; I Cor.2:7, etc.

⁴ Eph.6:19.

⁵ A.Stuart in HDB, III, p.465, points out the striking parallel between 'mystery' and mummary. The root verb of 'mystery' is *μῶω*, similar to Latin *mutus* which refers to a closing of the lips and eyes. Is sacramentalism mummary?

⁶ "Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World," p.206.

is cautious language, still it does not entirely absolve Paul from aiding the development of sacramentalism in Primitive Christianity.

The origin of the common name for the Eucharist, 'The Lord's Table,' may involve Paul, also, with the mystery-religions.¹ What did the expression 'Kuriakon deipnon,' (Lord's Supper) mean on the lips of Paul?² What was this meal? Was it the conclusion of the Agape or Love Feast, and then later called the Eucharist? Did the Lord's Supper mean both Agape and Eucharist? Or, on the other hand, was it distinct from the Love Feast?³ The answers to these questions are not easy to find. As for the word 'Lord' Deissmann says that "St. Paul took it from the language of contemporary constitutional law," and that "the word was common in Egypt and in Asia Minor during the imperial period."⁴ Paul was not, then, the only one who described his relationship to his 'Lord' as 'slave.' He, therefore, did not coin the word. For example, it was found twice in an edict-inscription of the Praefect of Egypt, Ti Julius Alexander (a Jew), of July 68 A.D., on the wall of the propylon of a temple at El-Khargeh in the great oasis. It is nonsense to say that this ruler borrowed the term from Paul's coinage. The

¹ I Cor. 10:21.

² I Cor. 11:20.

³ Note 'after supper,' I Cor. 11:25.

⁴ "Light from The Ancient East," p. 357. Note that Paul recognizes that there are 'Lord's many,' I Cor. 8:5.

Septuagint had translated the name for God, 'Jahveh,' into 'Lord.'¹ The discovery of the word in the Oxyrhynchus Papyri of the second century, is also interesting. The letter of the Egyptian soldier, Apion, to his father is a very good illustration.

" . . . I thank the Lord Serapis that, when I was in peril in the sea, he saved me immediately."²

We note also that the Apocalypse designates Sunday (?) as the 'Lord's Day.'³ Deissmann feels that there were two independent and parallel developments of this term, one among the Greeks and the other from the Aramaic cult-title, Marana, with no genealogical connection perceivable.

Whether there was any connection between Paul's usage, 'The Lord's Table,' and that known as the 'table of the Lord Serapis,' is conjectural. The similarity is arrestingly striking. A second century papyrus of Oxyrhynchus has this remarkable invitation to a meal:

"Chaeremon invites thee to dine at the table of the Lord Serapis in the Serapeum tomorrow, the 15th at nine o'clock."⁴

Aristides, a second-century Greek writer, speaks of the enjoyment that people found in communion with Serapis.

¹ See Mal.1:7,12; Ezek.39:20; 44:16 (LXX).

² The Caesars were also called 'Lord.' Oxy.Pap.No 1143, of the year 1 A.D., mentions the sacrifices and libations for the 'God and Lord Emperor' (Augustus).

³ Rev.1:10, etc.

⁴ Pap.Ox., i, 110.

We know that such religious meals were very common in antiquity,¹ such as the Greek *sussitia*, though their exact significance is not understood. The guilds, for example, held commemorative feasts in honor of departed members who were thought of as being present. In all of the cult meals of the Graeco-Roman age, the god was thought of as being present as guest or host. An inscription from Kos mentions "the table of the god (Hercules)." Aristides says that Serapis invited him to "the hearth as guest and host." V. Maximus states that Jupiter was invited to his banquet, also Juno and Minerva.

We conclude, then, that a 'table' for the 'Lord' was not something entirely new and unique with Paul. In fact the custom was so common in his time and having such connotation that the rank and file of the people sometimes mistook one table for another. Hence the reason for Paul's censure to the Christians at Corinth. Three points are clear: (1) Paul's converts were living in the atmosphere and practice of the pagan mysteries; (2) there was a relation between Paul's environment and the mystery-religions; and (3) Paul used mystery-religion ideas

¹ The temple of Isis at Pompeii had such meals. Josephus states that Caesar had given permission to the Jews of the Diaspora to meet for such ceremonies. Antiq. 24, x, 8.

and terminology. He speaks of eating and drinking judgment—a magical idea. The application of his doctrine of mystery transforms in great measure the conception of the Eucharist in the early church. Yet in the full sense of the word Paul is hardly a sacramentarian since he never mentions the necessity of a priest. But he is responsible, as Gardner says, for introducing "certain phases which have had a great influence on the doctrine and practice of the church."¹ For example, Paul's interpretation of the bread and wine, and his protests against abuses, finally led to the separation of the Eucharist from the Love Feast or common meal. Thus the former came to be represented by small portions of bread and wine which were eaten symbolically if not with greater significance.

Before passing on it might be of interest to ask as to whether the members of Paul's church at Corinth observed the Lord's Supper as a funeral banquet for the departed or not. Since they practiced baptism for the dead it is not at all unlikely that the Eucharist was a meal in which the dead supposedly took part. Paul's very conception would lend itself

¹ "The Religious Experience of St. Paul," p.111.

to the idea of the Supper as a funeral feast. We know that these banquets go back to prehistoric times in India, Persia, Egypt and Europe. The whole Roman empire knew of the meals provided for the dead who were supposed to have enjoyed the repasts provided in the Elysian Fields. Aphrates a Syrian author c 320 A.D., has the following description:

"There the air is pleasant and serene, a brilliant light shines, trees grow of which the fruit ripens perpetually, of which the leaves never fall, and beneath these shades, which give out sweet perfume, the souls eat this fruit and are never satisfied."¹

That the early Christians held such beliefs about communion is clear from the art of the catacombs. We also know that the Montanists in Africa practiced a Eucharist for the dead.² The Acts of John tells us that by prayer and breaking of bread the death of a certain Fortunatus was brought about.³ Plato had to protest against similar magical practices in his day.⁴ Augustine reprimanded those "who, while serving meals to corpses, bury themselves with those buried bodies, making a religion of their greed and their drunkenness."⁵ Had Jesus only known how much rivalry and bitterness and other abuses were to occur about his table and his tomb, he might have left an

1 *Patrologia Orientalis*, I.p.1014.

2 See Philastrius, *Haer.*, 49, and the Council of Carthage, *Sim.* ix, 16.

3 73.

4 *Rep.* II 364a ff.

5 *De Mor.eccles.*, 34.

injunction such as Aurelius Vitalio wrote on his family tomb:

"I ask you, my companions, to refresh yourselves here without quarreling."

2. SYNOPTIC TRADITION

Lack of verbal and literal agreement in the Synoptic accounts which purport to give Jesus' institution of the Eucharist, shows what a delusion the verbal inspiration of the Bible turns out to be. Out of the three accounts—four if we include Paul's—only five words in Greek (but four in English!), "This is my body," are identically the same. Very few competent scholars maintain that we have any certain record of the actual words of Jesus. At most all that we may expect to find, after careful search, is the general attitude and mind of Jesus. After all there is no better criterion than the spirit of Jesus. "The letter killeth but the spirit maketh alive."

By the time the Synoptic accounts reached the form in which we have them—being written between 65 A.D., and 80 A.D.,—there was ample time for both a development in doctrine as well as in practice, such as we saw above in the Pauline period. While we need not

accuse the New Testament writers of misrepresentation, for they wrote with honest purpose, no doubt, yet we must be prepared for inaccuracies. While they wrote what they believed Jesus said and done, yet in the passage of half a century after the events recorded, oral and written tradition adding also what it thought took place, errors were almost inevitable. Besides this, we must remember that the doctrine and practice of the early church at the various times of transmission, compilation and redaction, would also colour the narratives by reading in the mind of the church. In addition to this, it is almost certain that several traditions about the same matters arose at different periods in widely separated and different centers: I Corinthians at Ephesus 55 A.D.; Mark at Rome c 65 A.D.; Luke at Corinth c 75 A.D.; and Matthew at Antioch 80 A.D. A careful glance at the paralleled accounts here appended, from Moffatt's translation, will indicate some of the important points of difference and agreement. The Pauline account is also added for the sake of comparison.

INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST

I Cor.11.	Luke 22.	Mark 14.	Matthew 26.
24.	19.	22.	26
On the night he was betrayed the Lord Jesus took a loaf and after thanking God he broke it, saying, "This means my body broken for you; do this inmemory of me."	Then he took a loaf and after thanking God he broke it and gave it to them saying, "This means my body (given up for your sake; do this in memory of me.)"	And as they were eating he took a loaf and after the blessing he broke and gave it to them saying, "Take this it means my body."	And as they were eating he took a loaf and after the blessing he broke it; then he gave it to the disciples saying, "Take and eat this, it means my body."
25.	17.	23.	27.
He took the cup after supper saying, "This cup means the new covenant ratified by my blood as oft as you drink it, do it in memory of me."	And he took a cup which was given him, giving thanks to God and said "Take this and distribute it among yourselves, (20 b "This cup means the new covenant ratified by my blood shed for your sake").	He also took a cup and after thanking God he gave it to them, and they all drank; he said to them "This means my covenant-blood which is shed for many."	He also took a cup and after thanking God he gave it to them saying, "Drink of it, all of you; this means my blood, the new covenant-blood, shed for many to win the remission of sins"

In the first place, the significant thing to note is that there are two main traditions underlying the four accounts, namely the Markan and the Pauline.¹ For example, the command to keep the Supper is found only in one Synoptist, Luke, which, as is well known, is an interpolation from I Corinthians. Since early Western texts of Luke have not 19 b-20, we know that the original draft of this Gospel did not contain this passage.² Luke's order was undoubtedly like that found in the Didache, namely, wine and bread.³ Most Greek MSS of Luke, however, have the second cup and fill in from the Pauline account. It is noticeable that the Lukan expression, "given up for your sake," is very doubtful, since it is not in any of the other three accounts and is itself omitted from Luke in some manuscripts. We notice that Luke makes the bread quite prominent in his Gospel. He has several accounts of the breaking of bread without the mention of wine.⁴

¹ Luke 22:19 is most certainly based on I Cor. 11:24. Both Paul and Luke agree against Matthew and Mark who have "This means my covenant-blood which is shed," for the Pauline-Lukan parallel, "This cup means the new covenant ratified by my blood." See other instances.

² von Soden and Tischendorf, however, accept this section as authentic. Wellhausen thinks that 19-20 is a later insertion to show that Jesus had instituted the rite.

³ Pfleiderer, J. Weiss and Goguel believe that Jesus used bread only. This conflicts with the custom of the Didache as well as the order found in I Cor. 10:16 and in the Kiddush where the wine comes before the bread. Thus it looks as if the shorter account of Luke is the more genuine one as Bacon believes.

⁴ See ch. 24:30b, 35. Blass says that Luke did not intend to give an account of the institution.

It may be that his silence indicates a protest against the use of wine, it being too much of a luxury for poor communicants. The confusion in his report of the Last Supper, is likely due, as Streeter believes, to his effort to harmonize several sources. With four cups in the Passover rites, it is easily seen that Luke might make mention of more than one. We might suppose, also, that he is writing down what he heard Paul say, or even taught along with Paul. Possibly he is conflating Paul's own two accounts of the Supper.¹ He, therefore, adds two cups as he may not have been sure which order is right—that is, if we admit 19b-20 to be from Luke's pen.

In the second place, we would expect that Mark, who knew Paul, being his companion, would show more familiarity with the version of the Supper in I Corinthians. An argument from silence is not to be relied on, however. Only in one instance does he reflect Pauline thought, perhaps, and that is with regard to the blood of Christ being a covenant. The Epistle to the Hebrews (c 85 A.D.) has the same view. Such thinking seems to be based on Exodus 24:8 and was

¹ Compare I Cor. 11:25 with 10:16.

a doctrine current in the early church, and then added to the Supper narratives as though Jesus had spoken it. We must bear in mind also that if Papias is right, Mark, who received a great deal of information from Peter, would represent the Petrine tradition, being at the same time, familiar with Pauline doctrine.¹ Note that Mark has not the word ~~φ~~αγετε (eat) the same as Matthew, which is absent in Paul and Luke. Then, the command to eat is not found in our two earliest accounts--I Corinthians 11:24-25, and the Gospel of Mark. This would lead us to believe that Jesus did not give the command to eat. It is quite clear that Matthew enlarges on the sources he uses. In passing we notice that Matthew has no command for 'all' to eat, yet he adds "Drink ye of it, 'all' of you."² This order about the cup is ignored by the Roman Catholic church, the laity not being allowed to partake of the wine in the Eucharist. But Matthew's command to drink at all, is simply an inference from Mark who simply states that "they all drank." So that the command of Jesus to eat and to drink has very little evidence to show that he really said so. Matthew's theory that the blood of Christ is shed "to win the remission of sins," is simply a reflection of later doctrine in

¹ Bacon points out that the Petrine element conceived of the bread and wine as a banquet in the Kingdom, but that the Markan account has been coloured by Pauline theology.

² Matthew is more like Paul than he is like the Didache.

the Christian church.

Our earliest sources, Paul and Mark, agree that the shed blood has a saving effect. Luke is more explicit, the bread being 'given' and the blood shed for 'you.' But both expressions are questionable, and are omitted in some Lukan manuscripts. The Pauline word *κλωμενον* (broken) though found in the Textus Receptus, is omitted by such authorities as Tischendorf, Westcott and Hort, J. Weiss, etc., on the ground of external evidence. Beyschlag, on the contrary, believes it to be genuine.. The 'after-supper' cup in Paul's account seems to be the fourth cup of the Passover meal. The Talmud calls the third cup, referred to by Paul, probably,¹ "the cup of blessing." Here again, the literalist will ask in vain as to which cup is the right one for the Christian Eucharist. We note, also, that Mark represents Jesus as giving the explanation about his blood being the covenant-blood (it is questionable whether Jesus ever referred to it as such) after the cup had been consumed. In any case the evidence for Jesus telling his disciples to drink his blood, is nil in the Markan account. More than this, some scholars believe that an early

¹ "The cup of blessing which we bless." I Cor. 10:16.

Mark may have been circulated without verses 22-24, in other words, that these two verses is an interpolation.

The 'blessing' in Mark said over the loaf can hardly have been a consecration. The Pauline parallel has 'thanks.' The two words *εὐλογία* (blessing) and *ευχαριστία* (thanksgiving) are practically synonymous. In connection with the cup, the three Synoptists use the word 'thanks.' There is no foundation for the modern consecration which sacramentarians so meticulously and sacredly stress. Such acts of blessing were characteristic of Jesus, such as when he fed the five thousand or gave thanks or said a blessing over a common meal. Thanksgiving and blessing were often intermingled at meals among the Jews. Gould suggests that "having praised God," gives the correct rendering in the section about the bread. There is no foundation, then, for the belief that Jesus consecrated the loaf.

The expression *τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου* (this is my body) in all four accounts, is the crux of the Eucharistic problem, since it has given rise to the doctrines of the Presence of Christ in the Supper and of the theory of transubstantiation. Easton

is probably right in pointing out that "the only valid interpretation of these words is that which starts with a meaning the disciples could have understood when Christ spoke; a principle that rules out the bulk of later Eucharistic teaching. A great deal seems to hang on the word *τοῦτο* (this). What does 'this' refer to? Not to the bread, since 'this' is neuter and bread masculine. Easton suggests that the word is the subject of 'is,' perhaps, 'this (broken) bread.' As Plummer points out, it is strange that if the institution of the Eucharist is so vitally important as many claim, that the record should be so widely different in the four accounts. The perfection of transmission has not been guaranteed for these important words. Gould adds that these words, 'This is my body,' are words of administration and not words of consecration. Box firmly believes, on the other hand, that they are the genuine words of Our Lord. Tho this be true, we should not take the words of the orientalist literally. We should remember that Jesus also said that he was 'the door,' and that the field was the world, etc.¹

Another puzzling statement is that which

¹ A.E.Crawley believes that the words "This is my body. . . This is my blood," are 'no crude survivals of earlier and cruder rubrics, but are imaginative direction to identify the sources of physical with those of spiritual nutriment." ERE, Art. "Eating the God," vol.I, p.139.

speaks of the cup as being a 'new' covenant. Though the word 'new' seems to be out of place with covenant in Mark and Matthew,¹ yet they both add "drink it new," in the context later. The Pauline tradition has 'new covenant' which is a frequent expression with him. But this is clearly the language of Jeremiah 31:31.² Gould regards the words to have been borrowed from the institution of the law regarded as a covenant between God and the Jews.³

We should draw attention to the fact that the proper translation of διαθήκη is 'covenant,' not 'testament,' as we find it in Eucharistic usage today and in the King James version of the Bible. There is, perhaps, but one place in the whole Bible where the correct translation is 'testament,' or 'will.' The place is found in Hebrews 9:16,17 where it is in the classical Greek. In all other places diatheke should be rendered 'covenant.'⁴ Gould would also regard the cup as being symbolical to the mind of Jesus. "This wine represents my blood, i.e., my covenant blood, or my blood shed to ratify a covenant." Thomas Walker

¹ Many authorities insert 'new.'

² "A day will come. . . when I shall make a fresh compact (new covenant) with all Israel." (Moffatt)

³ See Ex.24:8; Lev.17.

⁴ So RV, Moffatt and Goodspeed. 'Testament' comes, of course, from the Latin 'testamentum.' Deissmann says that "No one in the Mediterranean world in the first century A.D., would have thought or found in the word diatheke, 'Covenant.' "Light from the Ancient East," pp.337 f.

reminds us that Jesus had spoken before of the cup of suffering to the point of martyrdom. This would interpret the cup for those present at the table as a pledge of a new covenant or religion of sacrifice even unto death.

It may be that Walker is right in thinking that Jesus intended laying the foundation of a new religion of self-sacrifice. The so-called Zadokite document, written very likely before Jesus' time, had the idea of a new covenant of repentance linked with the expectation of a Messiah. John the Baptist also had a similar idea, and Jesus, we remember, took up the message of the Baptist. Paul uses the covenant idea to contrast Christ with the new covenant, and Hebrews explicitly claims that the Jeremaic prediction of the new covenant has been fulfilled. Jesus may have had the same conception about himself. Moffatt says that Jesus' mind was steeped in the prophecies of the Old Testament and the idea of the Suffering Servant. Moffatt agrees with Harnack that the New Testament books "were original documents of the second covenant which God concluded through Jesus."

One of the many difficulties regarding

what happened at the Last Supper is the question as to whether it was a paschal meal or not. The Synoptists certainly identify the last meal of Jesus with the Passover. Curiously enough, however, most modern scholars have come now to accept the Johannine representation that Jesus did not eat a paschal meal with his disciples the last night of his life, but partook of pre-passover meal—perhaps the Kiddush—the night before.¹ If this was the case it seems strange that the early Christians should have associated the Last Supper and identified it with the Passover. Personally, we believe that the easiest solution of the problem lies in the belief that Jesus did eat a paschal meal before his demise. Against the theory that the Lord's Supper was a Passover celebration stands the fact that the primitive church held a daily and weekly observance of the Lord's Supper. It would seem that only a yearly celebration may be expected if the early Christians replaced the Jewish Passover with the Eucharist. It is quite likely, however, that for some time early Christians simply kept their own observances as Jewish Christians, side by side with their old Hebrew rites and feasts. The daily and weekly commemoration of the Agape or Love Feasts were observed in addition to Jewish feasts. It was observed not only to perpetuate the meals which

¹ The chief exponents of the theory are Drews, Spitta, Box, Foxley, Burkitt and Oesterley. Some who are opposed; Lambert, Blakiston, Chwolson, Srawley and Dalman. (See footnote Oesterley's "The Jewish Background, etc," p.166).

they had partaken with their Lord, 'the breaking of bread,' but the Agape also helped to supply the need for more frequent communion meals, desired by those who were used to the Greek guild meals and the banquets of the mystery-religions. A combination of both Jewish and Graeco-Roman cult meals thus produced the Christian Eucharist. In a sense the newly evolving rite within the Christian church was both like and unlike the two religious worlds from which it came. But back of the Eucharist was its parent the Jewish Passover, out of which, we believe, it directly sprang. If it can be shown that the Synoptic tradition is more likely to be true than the Fourth Gospel's representation, we feel that the Lord's Supper is much more clearly accounted for.

Without getting lost in a maze of speculation, it will be wise for us to trace in brief outline the evidence, pro and con, for a Passover identification. First let us list the facts which seem to discredit the paschal identification.

1. Lack of distinctive paschal features. For example, only one cup is mentioned, except in Luke. But since the institution is at the close of the meal there would be no need to mention the fact of the other cups having been drunk.

2. "After 'two' days was the feast of the Passover." (Mk 14:1).

3. "Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar." (Mk 14:2).

4. The Jews would not bear arms on the Feast Day. (Mk 14:47; Lk 22:38).
5. The trial of Jesus would not occur on this day, either. (Mk 14:53; 15:1 and plls).¹
6. Bazaars would not be open to sell linen (Mk 15:46) nor spices (Mk 16:1; Lk 23:56; 24:1).
7. Simon would not be coming from work in the field. (Mk 15:21).
8. Jesus and his disciples would remain in the house after eating the Passover, according to custom.
9. The desire of Jesus to eat the paschal meal, just as though he knew he might not. "I shall not eat, etc. (Lk 22:15 f., only).
10. Not only is there no mention of a Passover lamb or flesh, Mark's word for 'bread' in verse 22 does not suggest unleavened bread.²
11. Paul speaks of Christ our Passover, which would look as though he believed that Jesus was offered up, i.e., expired at the time of the slaying of the lambs 14th Nisan (Friday).³

The Fourth Gospel has the following data which are against the Synoptic representation of the time of certain occurrences, noted above.

1. The Last Supper takes place before the Passover (13:1) and Judas after the meal goes out to buy the necessary things for the coming paschal celebration (13:28-30).
2. After Jesus' arrest the Jews refuse to enter the palace of Pilate for fear of pollution, since they wish to be able to eat the Passover ceremonially clean (18:28).⁴

¹ Justin Martyr records a tradition that Jesus was crucified on the day of the Passover. "It is written that ye took him and crucified him on the day of the Passover." Trypho, 111.

² Mk and plls use ἀρτος in the Supper narrative which is not the word they should use ἀζυμα (unleavened bread) and did use in Mk 14:1 and plls. See Sanday HDB III, 637.

³ I Cor. 5:7.

⁴ See the prohibition in Ex. 12:16.

TIME CHART

SHOWING CRUCIFIXION AND PASSOVER DATES

(Harmonizing John and Synoptists)¹

DATE	JOHANNINE	SYNOPTIC
13 NISAN (6 p.m.Wed- to 6 p.m. <u>Thursday</u>). ²	Kiddush (?)	Eucharist (Passover).
14 NISAN (6 p.m.Thur- to 6 p.m. <u>Friday</u>).	Arrest. Trial. Crucifixion. Burial. 'Day of Preparation." ³	Arrest. Trial. Crucifixion. Burial. Preparation for the Sabbath. ³
15 NISAN (6 p.m.Fri- to 6.m. <u>Saturday</u>).	Day of the Passover. Sabbath. ⁴	Day of the Passover.(Sabbath ⁴) Jews ask for a guard for the tomb on the day "after the Preparation." ⁵
16 NISAN (6 p.m.Sat- to 6 p.m. <u>Sunday</u>).	Resurrection. "The First day." ⁶	Resurrection on the "First day of the week." ⁶

¹ On the theory that the slaying of the lambs and the eating of the Passover were placed back 24 hours this year when the Passover (15th Nisan) fell on the Sabbath. The Synoptic date is put back one day.

² "On the 14th day of the first month towards evening the Passover of the Eternal begins." Lev.23:5.

³ See Mk .5:42; Lk 23:54; Mtt.27:62; John 19:14,31,42.

⁴ Lk 23:54; John 19:31.

⁵ Mtt.27:62-66.

⁶ John 20:1; Mk 16:2 and plls; verse 9.

3. John 19:14-31 says that Jesus was crucified on the day of the Preparation.
4. Jesus was buried before the Passover even begins. So how could he have eaten the meal? (19:42).

This whole problem is so intricate and vexatious that it would be out of place to go into all the details here. But may we briefly mention a few matters that ought to be considered before passing from the subject.

In the first place, there is entire agreement between John and the Synoptists that Jesus' crucifixion and burial took place on the day of Preparation, i.e., evidently on Friday, the day before the Sabbath (our Saturday). That it was the 'Preparation' for the Sabbath and not simply preparation for Passover, is clear from Mark 15:42 and Luke 23:54 (and perhaps Matthew 27:62). John, we have noted says that it is the day of Preparation,¹ but does not state that it is the preparation for the Sabbath, inferring, rather, that it is preparation for the Passover (18:28). So, then, the Synoptists show that the Passover had already taken place, Thursday night, whereas John says that it has yet to be eaten. The Synoptists, however, are clearly in error by telling about certain infractions of the holy day (Passover Day—6 p.m. 14th Nisan (Friday) to 6 p.m. 15th Nisan (Saturday) or Jewish Sabbath). Whether Passover fell on

¹ 19: 14, 31, 42.

a Sabbath or not (thus making it doubly sacred), that year, the incidents of trial, bearing arms, etc., shown by the Synoptists, could not have taken place on that day immediately following the arrest of Jesus. What is necessary, then, is that the Lord's Supper—especially if it was a paschal meal—must be placed back one day, if violations of the 15th. Nisan are to be avoided. And this is exactly what we find the author of the Fourth Gospel doing! Doubtless, he had, later, come to see the difficulties of the Synoptic accounts which we have just pointed out, and, therefore, in accordance with other purposes, tried to correct the mistake by showing that the Passover had not taken place before Jesus' trial and death. He has, then, to supply another meal in the place of the Passover for Jesus and his disciples. Some scholars, such as Oesterley in his very cogent way,¹ believe that John is right, and that the meal which Jesus ate with his disciples on the night of his betrayal was not a paschal meal but a Passover-'Kiddush,' or pre-Passover meal.

We still, hold, however, that the Last Supper was a paschal meal and that John is wrong in inferring otherwise, but we do believe that the Fourth

¹ "The Jewish Background of the Christian Liturgy," chs. VI and VII.

² Or Chaburah meal. See Oesterly, op.cit., indexes.

Gospel is unconsciously on the right track in placing Jesus' last meal back another day. He is right in doing this but does not know that he is right, because the one fact which would justify him is not known to him. And what was that bit of historical evidence which he may not have possessed? Namely this,— which the Synoptic writers failed to mention—that when the Passover fell in any year on the Sabbath, the killing of the lambs was put back (and of course the Passover meal, also) one day because of the double sanctity of the occurrence. If this was the case and the Passover the year of Jesus' death was moved back twenty-four hours, then we can most easily harmonize both the Johannine and the Markan traditions.

Oesterly accepts the belief that John's reference to that Sabbath being a 'great day,'¹ means that the Passover fell on the Sabbath.² Strangely enough Oesterly ignores completely the suggestion of Chwolson and Klausner that the feast may have been moved back to another night. He dogmatically states, not giving any authority, that, "according to Jewish custom a feast took precedence of the Sabbath on such occasions."³ There is no evidence to show that

¹ 19:31.

² Op.,cit. pp.159 ff.

³ Ibid.,p.160.

Hillel's ruling, that the Passover abrogated the Sabbath, had come into effect in Jesus' time.¹

The following from Warschauer is significant:

"The 15th Nisan, the first day of the Sabbath, and the killing and roasting of the lamb would therefore (according to Jacobs) have taken place on the Sabbath eve, when no killing must be done and no fire lit, it was customary among more pious Jews to anticipate the Passover meal by one day, slaying the lamb on the eve between the 13th and 14th Nisan, and eating it on the eve of the 14th. So, then, if this is so, the meal on the Thursday 13th Nisan was the Passover meal, put back by twenty-four hours, just because in that year the feast concurred with the Sabbath."²

The Shammai school, Klausner says, was more strict than this and would not permit work during the night before the eve (i.e., during Thursday night in this case³) in an event like this of a Passover-Sabbath.

As our accounts stand, the Johannine and Synoptic traditions on the matter are utterly at variance. Such scholars as Otto, Box, Spitta, Brooke, Burkitt, Bacon, Wellhausen, E. Meyer, Streeter (Moffatt almost) do not accept the Last Supper as a Passover meal. On the other hand, Dalman, Schmiedal, Lambert, Strauss, etc., defend the Synoptists.

There are several considerations which ought also be pointed out, weighing against the Kiddush

¹ Hillel died about the time of Jesus' birth.

² "The Historical Life of Christ," p.

³ See the time chart facing p. 77.

hypothesis and the Johannine chronology.

1. We must remember that John is very much swayed by his doctrinal ideas. Burkitt remarks that the transferring of the Eucharistic teaching from the Last Supper to the earlier Galilean miracle is a deliberate sacrifice of historical truth. John makes every meal a sacrament—and rightly so in a particular sense—and Jesus himself the bread of life which we must eat. He clearly demonstrates his untrustworthiness as an historian. We may not say, however, that John deliberately falsifies historical fact for spiritual truth—although the latter is of more importance than the former. John attempts to symbolize and spiritualize the facts as he knows them. We should remember, also, that the earlier writers were in a better position than John, so far as time was concerned, to obtain authentic material. The very difficulties about the earlier accounts may indeed be points for their authenticity. It does seem strange that the primitive church did not know whether Jesus' last meal was a Passover or not. As Strauss says, we cannot suppose the meal in question to have been any other than the paschal."

2. The Synoptists definitely state that the meal was a Passover. "Where wilt thou that we prepare the Passover?"¹ "And when the hour was come, etc."²

3. There are paschal features of the meal in spite of the absences noticed above. Moffatt admits that the paschal allusions are strong.

(a) The Supper was eaten in Jerusalem where the law commanded it to be eaten.³ For what purpose was all the trouble and secrecy and risk; simply to eat an ordinary meal?

(b) The meal was eaten by the group for whom it was prepared, and at night.

(c) The singing of the Hallel at night indicated, according to Jerusalem Talmudic tradition, a paschal observance.

(d) Jesus expressly made periodic journeys to Jerusalem for his nation's feasts, particularly the Passover.

(e) Other resemblances are: prayers and thanksgivings were uttered; two cups are indicated in Paul and Luke; the hand was dipped in the dish (which Wellhausen thinks suggests the paschal lamb); and also exposition and solemn demeanor.

¹ Mk 14:12 and p11s.

² Lk 22:14. Cf. P11s.

³ Deut. 16:5-7.

4. Pauline references also support a paschal identification. His use of the word 'memorial';¹ the 'proclaiming' of the Lord's death, sounds like the Haggada; and the 'cup of blessing' seems to correspond with the third cup of the Passover.

5. Finally, Matthew tells us that Jesus reminds his disciples that his death is to occur during the Passover.² This, of course, may merely be a prophecy put into the mouth of Jesus, still it might represent Jesus' expectancy to perish at that time. At any rate, we should hardly find the Synoptist putting words in Jesus' mouth that might contradict a well-known fact.

The very inconsistency in the early church, of celebrating a Passover-like weekly meal, indicates that nothing less than a paschal origin would explain the anachronism. There is, indeed, some very good evidence to show that a similar celebration like that of the annual Jewish Passover, was held yearly in the Christian church in Asia Minor,—the date used for the celebration (Easter with the Lord's Supper) was always the 14th Nisan, regardless of what day in the week —whether Sunday or not—it might fall on!

¹ I Cor. 11:23 f. Cf. Ex. 12:14.

² Such prediction is evidently later than Jesus.

It was over this question—the relation of Easter to Passover—that the East and the West, represented by Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, and Anicetus, Bishop of Rome, respectively, had such strong differences in 154 A.D. In Laodicea itself, but thirteen years later, another dispute broke out over the proper date of Easter, one side holding that the Johannine date of Christ's death, the 14th Nisan, was the right time to celebrate Easter with Lord's Supper, while the other side of the controversy held to the Passover date 15th Nisan. The faction was so strong, one side holding so strongly that the Last Supper was a paschal celebration, the Asian church in the latter part of the second century was rent asunder. Those, then, who accept the Johannine theory regarding the separateness of the original Supper and the Passover, will have to account for the origin of the tradition—held to so tenaciously by a section of the early church—that the Lord's Supper and the Jewish Passover were one and the same thing in the beginning.

Whatever may be the truth about the matter we cannot seem to escape the conclusion, as Rhees puts it, that the last meal of Jesus with his disciples

was for that little company the equivalent of the Passover supper. In other words, an adequate explanation of the facts presented in the Synoptic tradition, as we now have it, requires a Passover meal as its foundation, whatever the evidence against the belief may be. The last meal does not seem to be merely a farewell feast without Jewish ceremony as John seems to indicate.

Accepting, then, tentatively, the theory that the Passover was moved back one day to avoid desecration of the Paschal Sabbath (15th Nisan), which harmonizes the Markan and Johannine traditions, let us accept the following picture by Bosworth of the Passover-Supper, as that of the Last Supper which Jesus partook with his disciples.

"It was a joyful feast eaten in the early part of the night by groups of from ten to twenty to commemorate the nation's flight in the night when God delivered them from Egyptian bondage. The menu of the feast, as nearly as can be ascertained from general Biblical allusions to it and from detailed post-biblical descriptions of it in the Talmud, was very simple and dramatically symbolic. It consisted of 'unleavened' bread suggestive of the traditional hurried exit from Egypt when there had been no time to use yeast in the baking; a lamb roasted whole without breaking a bone or cutting off the head, bringing to mind the lamb's blood sprinkled on the door-case of each faithful Hebrew family on the night of the great exodus when God 'Passed over' the blood-sprinkled houses and did not stop as elsewhere, to deal out death to any

luckless first born. In addition to these two principle articles of food there were four cups of wine for each person; salty water to be used with a variety of bitter herbs, as usually constituted an appetizing side dish; and a pasty mixture of crushed fruits and vinegar flavoured with spices, thought to be suggestive of the clay used by the Hebrew bondmen in their brick making. Into this dish morsels of food were dipped. At certain times during the meal the cups of wine were drunk; there were various prayers of thanksgiving and blessing, a recital of parts of the national history before and after the great exodus and the chanting at different times of parts of Psalms 113 to 118 and 136."¹

It was such a meal as this we believe the Last Supper to have been. If so, then, it explains the Jewish ideas and resemblances we find associated with the Eucharist. Even though it could be shown that the Last Supper was not a Passover meal, it would take but a little shifting of date to a little later period, to account for the Jewish intrusions which certainly entered the Christian Eucharist at sometime.

More than anything else, we should like to know the state of Jesus' mind on that last night. Julicher calls the Last Supper Jesus' last parable. What, indeed, were his thoughts about the bread and wine? Was the supper but a parable or symbol to him? Did he, as Weinel and Julicher believe, compare

¹ "The Life and Teaching of Jesus," pp.355 f.

"the broken bread and the red outpoured wine with his tortured body and shed blood." Did he go so far as to institute something, or even give a command? Friedlander thinks that Jesus never intended the meal, which was a private affair, to become a public worship, a new worship or a perpetual memorial of his death, since he was to return soon. Schweitzer, of course, thinks that the Supper was one of the eschatological sacraments which later, under the eschatological movement, became detached from Judaism under the name of Christianity. This explains, he thinks, Paul's conception and use of the Supper. Schweitzer, therefore, is certain that it is impossible to "adduce a single syllable in support of the idea that after the death of Christ. . . the Lord's Supper existed for an hour as a symbolic action." Paul makes this supposition wholly impossible, he adds. This view of the Last Supper raises the big question as to the apocalypticism of Jesus. More than one earnest searcher has sought to discover whether Jesus' ideals were catastrophic or evolutionary, or did he simply accommodate his teaching to popular beliefs? We ought to see that there were many phases and factors in Jesus' teaching, and that his truth was many-sided. No one theory can account for it, nor explain it. His view of the Kingdom of God—which

was related to the meaning of the Last Supper for him—was prophetic, immanental, ethical, sudden, gradual, apocalyptic, transcendental and spiritual. All of these conceptions were germinal to his thought.

Jesus seems to have had no special regard for sacraments or institutions as such.¹ In fact he utters a warning against 'vain repetitions.' The Lord's Supper is but one of many good customs that became corrupt by the loss of spiritual insight. He was neither the enemy nor the strong supporter of institutionalism. His demand was that institutions ought to be spiritual and tried to make them so, not by destroying them but by vitalizing them from within. He created no new nor particular forms of worship or organization. He left no mechanics nor fettering forms nor moulds, but a yeast of leaven, a vitalizing life and a great spiritual seed. Indeed, it is clear that we cannot conceive of Jesus thinking that the eating of a particular article of food in a particular way under particular conditions made a man spiritual. "Nothing entering a man can defile a man," he said. The reverse is as equally true.

¹ Cf. his attitude towards the Sabbath and towards baptism.

Dean Inge's theory that Jesus deliberately chose and inaugurated the two ceremonies of Baptism and the Eucharist, and freed them of all unworthy connotation and established them for the future of the church,¹ can hardly be true to fact. As T.R. Glover says, there is a growing consensus of opinion that Jesus instituted no sacraments.² But it was at the Council of Trent, 1547, that it was claimed that the Sacraments were divinely instituted and are generally necessary to salvation. Anathema was declared on all those who denied the number of Sacraments to be less than seven. The attitude of the Reformers lacked but little less of credulity, when they on their part declared that only two had Dominical institution. Now, the number of sacraments instituted by Jesus is reduced to zero. Mr.H.G.Wood is right in saying that "it is doubtful if we ought to say that he (Jesus) ordained the Sacrament (the Eucharist). But it was natural that whensoever the disciples met to break bread they should recall what Jesus did on that last night when he was betrayed."³ Thus it was, that later on, Christians felt that this rite of theirs had originated with Jesus on the night of the Passover,

¹ "Contentio Veritatis," pp. 279 ff.

² Neither is there any evidence that Jesus founded a church. See "Conflict of Religions," Glover, p.158.

³ Art."The Life and Teachings of Jesus," Peake's Comm.p.668.

and that he specifically ordained it then. The subsequent intrusion of verses 19 and 20 into the Lukan account of the Supper, seems to show that this was the case. It is no new conclusion that we have arrived at, i.e., that Jesus did not institute the Eucharist. As early as 1675, the Quaker, Robert Barclay, felt that Jesus never founded such an institution. Indeed, Luther himself said: "Christ has not commanded the use of any."

We are not to conclude, however, that in view of the foregoing, Jesus' last meal with his disciples did not have a high spiritual significance for him. All meals and all life's associations did. But on such an occasion in the very crisis of his ministry, the meal at least could have been dramatically symbolic with its unleavened bread and slain lamb. With our Western mind, so precise and definite that we become paralyzed by too much analysis, are in danger of misconceiving the mysticism of oriental thought. Jesus' mind must have been surcharged with the thought of approaching danger—perhaps death. The portions of the meal being passed around might have appeared to him as mute symbols of his coming passion. And when he spoke it was, as usual, in the figurative mode.

And how natural if the words of Jesus the Son of Sirach came to his lips. "They that eat me shall yet be hungry; and they that drink me shall yet be thirsty."¹ Jesus ben Sirach had also written: "Wisdom shall feed him with the bread of understanding, and give him water of wisdom to drink."²

We must not, then, take the language of Jesus as reported on that night, too literally. It was the materialistic and Jewish literalism of Mark and Matthew which regarded his death as an atoning sacrifice. As Plummer points out whatever words of 'institution' Jesus may have uttered that night, they were spoken before his passion, while his body was present and his blood not yet shed! How could he ask them to literally eat his flesh and drink his blood? It is time that such crude literalisms be forever dismissed from Christian thinking.³ And, again, as Clemen indicates, Jesus had already forgiven sins from the very first part of his ministry, so that there was no need for him to say that his death was necessary to secure forgiveness.

That the ideas of feast and covenant were

1 xxiv:31. Written in Hebrew c 200 B.C., and translated into Greek about 180 B.C., so that Jesus was very likely acquainted with its language.

2 Ibid., xv:3.

3 Cf. Chrysostom: "Therefore he (Jesus) himself drank his own blood." Gospel of Matthew, Homily, LXXXII.

uppermost in the minds of Jesus and his disciples on that memorable night, we may be certain. E.F. Scott thinks that on the one hand, Jesus may have regarded the meal as the sign of the inauguration of a new covenant, and on the other, as a foreshadowing of a banquet in the Kingdom of God. We know that Jesus' chief purpose was to bring in a new and divine order, the Kingdom. The Passover would remind him of the covenant made with God on Israel's escape from Egyptian bondage. So that the new covenant now anticipated another age of joyous fellowship and satisfaction of all desire.

3. THE EUCHARIST OF THE EARLY CHURCH

Shortly after Jesus' death his followers came to believe that a new era had dawned or was about to begin. It was most natural that the expectation of his speedy return and the new age should be related to the meal that Jesus ate on the last night of his earthly life, which they believed they were to imitate until he came again. Thus came into being the breaking of bread from house to house, and they adopted the custom of having, not only their meals but all things in common. As time went by the practice of

'breaking of bread' took on a more formal and religious significance. The growing church looked forward by looking back, remembering the time when they had 'broken bread' with their Lord, and ever reading more meaning into the Last Meal as the days went by. Not only did the practice of breaking bread with Jesus, and the celebration of the Last Supper crystallize into a daily and weekly religious observance, the guild practice of eating sacramental or memorial meals, so common in the Hellenistic world, also helped to develop and modify the Christian practice. Angus points out that these cult meals, similar to the Agape, nearly always preceded initiation in such mysteries as the Eleusinian, Dionysiac and the Mithraic religions. Both bread and a cup of water were offered to the initiate. In the Samothracian rite the priest broke and offered the food and poured out the cup to the mystae. As the members of the Greek cult meals felt, so the early Christians believed that their unseen and departed Head was in some manner present with them at their meals.

So far as the New Testament is concerned, there is no evidence to show that a distinct Eucharist was celebrated in pre-Pauline Christianity. The book of

Acts, our chief source of primitive Christian usage, simply mentions the practice of the daily κλάσα ἄρτον (breaking of bread). Unfortunately nothing is told of its nature and order. We may assume that it was the Love Feast or Agape.

(1) The Agape.

The word ἀγάπη, exclusively Biblical (LXX), until the beginning of the first century B.C., did not connote anything more than sexual love. It is not until we come to the Epistle of Jude (100-125 A.D.) and the second letter of Peter (125-150 A.D.) that we find it applied to a Christian feast. In the former writing (12) we have the only definite mention of the Christian ἀγάπαι (plural) or love-feasts, in the New Testament. The other reference in II Peter 2:13, is less definite and seems to speak of the carousals, ἁγῶπαις that went on in the Christian community—a hint as to the abuses which were still occurring. Burch, in the Abingdon Commentary,¹ calls the meals in Acts, 'love-feasts,' but strictly speaking the text which reads κλάσα ἄρτον, 'breaking bread,' does not allow this translation. Both Moffatt and Goodspeed render in this way. It may be that Burch is right, but how does he know?

¹ Note his comments on Acts 2:22,46 and on 20:7,11.

Angus says that the agape or love-feast was patterned after the guild common meals, and is an adaptation of guild practices brought over by pagan converts who had been members of these organizations.¹ A fusion of the agape with the guild meal produced the Eucharist, we may believe. Batiffol holds that the agape was a later development and came into existence during the third century. His theory is evidently based on the silence of Paul and Acts.

The belief that the Eucharist evolved from the agape is confirmed by the fact of their close association and even identification for some time later.² Just to what part of, or in what part of the common meal (agape) the Eucharist began to be distinguished is not at all clear. Probably the order is reflected in the Synoptics where Jesus celebrates the Eucharist towards the close of the meal. Some believe that the Eucharist was at the beginning of the common meal.³ But at first there seems to have been no distinction at all between the two, there being but the daily or weekly 'breaking of bread.' Later, however, when such leaders as Paul and Clement tried

1 "Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World," p.80.

2 For Ignatius (c 115 A.D.) the two are the same. Smyr. viii,1 ff. See, also, the Didache.

3 See Art."Agape," ERE.vol.I, pp.166-175.

to correct abuses which sprang up in the love-feasts,¹ greater care was exercised over the sacred elements until the Eucharist became a distinct and separate rite, in the latter half of the first, or first quarter of the second century. For example we find in Ignatius a special sanctity being attached to the agape, or Eucharist.

"It is not lawful either to baptize or to hold an agape without a bishop."²

"Let that be considered a valid Eucharist which is celebrated by the bishop."³

Clement of Rome before the end of the first century (c 95 A.D.) also indicates that the chief function of the bishop's office is to offer sacrifice, i.e., the Eucharist.⁴ Clement believes that:

"He (the Master) commanded us to celebrate the sacrifices and services. . . at fixed times and hours."

"He has himself fixed by his supreme will the places and persons whom he desires for these celebrations . . ."

In another place he makes this significant statement:

"Let us fix our gaze on the blood of Christ, and let us know that it is precious to his Father (or God), because it was poured out for our salvation."

Here we observe a definite sacramental trend in the

¹ Cf. I Cor. 11:18-34.

² Smyr. viii, 1 ff.

³ Ibid.,

⁴ Ch. xlv, 3-4.

West before the close of the first century.

Tertullian (197-223 A.D.) in a detailed description of the agape, says:

"Our first feast explains itself by its name, . . . an act of religious service. . . . The participants, before reclining, taste first of prayer to God. As much is eaten as satisfies the cravings of hunger: as much is drunk as befits the chaste. . . . After the washing of hands and the bringing of lights, each is asked to stand forth and sing, as he can, a hymn to God, . . ."1

Curiously enough when the agape and the Eucharist were finally separated, the communion was placed in the morning for celebration and the love-feast observed in the evening, except on special feast days, such as Maundy-Thursdays, Christmas, Epiphany and Easter, when the Eucharist was still held at night.² Justin and Irenaeus do not mention the agape at all. The following from the former indicates the manner of the observance of the Eucharist in the middle of the second century.

"On the day of the Sun all who live in towns or in the country gather together to one place, etc. . . . At length prayer being ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president offers prayer and thanksgivings to the best of his ability and the people assent by saying Amen, and the distribution is made to each as his share of the elements which have been blessed and to those who are not present it is sent by the ministry of the deacons."³

1 Apol.c.39 (Ante-Nicene Library tr.)

2 See Schaff, "History of the Christian Church," II, pp. 239 f. Also Ambrose, Serm.viii in Ps.118.

3 Apol.I,67.

By the fourth century the agape had become merely a charity supper. Augustine says that his mother, Monica, took baskets of provisions to these feasts.

(2) Johannine teaching.

The Fourth Gospel is spiritually rather than historically minded. The writer significantly omits the account of the institution of the Lord's Supper. Some scholars, such as Headlam, think that John was not acquainted with the other Gospels. Most students believe, however, that he had the Eucharist in mind when he wrote the sixth chapter. John indicates that close connection between the miraculous feeding of the five thousand and the Supper, which is observed in early Christian art. Conybeare believes that John omitted the institution of the Supper because he did not find it in his copy of Mark. It may be that the expression "This is my body," is entirely Pauline since it is not found in the Didache.

John quite evidently spiritualizes all that he writes about. Like Philo, the Logos for him is

the 'Heavenly Bread' and also the 'Cup of God.'

"What gives life is the Spirit: flesh is of no avail at all."¹ God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship him in "spirit and in reality."² Jesus is represented as saying: "My food is to do the will of him who sent me."³ On the day of the festival (!) Jesus stood and cried: "If any man is athirst, let him come to me and drink."⁴ The spirit is like the wind, "it blows where it wills."⁵ It is not tied up to ceremony and ritual. Mere performance is not enough.

The ancients, like many present-day Christians, did not properly, if at all, distinguish between symbol and that symbolized. Paul and the other tradition represents Jesus as saying: "This is my body, etc." Johannine literature is not free from the same kind of realism. "We have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his son cleanses us from every sin."⁶ We find the writer of the Fourth Gospel putting these words in the mouth of Jesus:

¹ 6:63

² 4:24

³ 4:34

⁴ 7:37b.

⁵ 3:8 ff.

⁶ I John 1:7.

"Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."¹ Spitta and Anderson regard this section (6:51-59) as an interpolation from later church doctrine. It is curious how Roman Catholic doctrine gets round this plain teaching about taking the two elements. It takes refuge in verse 58 which represents Christ as being bread alone. Schweitzer and Reville interpret this section to mean that the elements of bread and wine perpetuate and are also the bearers of the Spirit. This seems vague thinking. C.H.C. MacGregor in his recent commentary on the Fourth Gospel, says that the meaning of 'give' my flesh in verse 51, is that of conveying nourishment and not that of offering sacrifice. MacGregor also thinks that the entire passage is not to be taken as the exact words of Jesus, but as a homily.

Peculiar importance is given in the Fourth Gospel, as in I Corinthians², to the eating and drinking of Christ's body and blood. In fact we find in John a further advance on Pauline thought, an inevitable interpretation of Paul's expressions in closer contact

¹ 6:53. On the basis of this verse infant communion with wine alone was practiced in the time of Cyprian, as in the Greek-Russian church today.
² Cf. ch. 11:20 f.

with the mystery-religions. The writer of this Gospel advances sacramentarianism—perhaps of a refined sort—a step further in the process. Though he has no particular polemic for the validity of any specific rite, yet he, more than any other New Testament writer, "has promoted the cause of sacramentalism,"¹ says Angus, since he conceives the Logos (Christ) to be imparted through the sacraments. Angus perceives in the Fourth Gospel an attempt to solve a problem by uniting two extreme views prevailing at the time, namely, a popular magical view of the Eucharist, on the one hand, and the Gnostic denial of the elements being the flesh and blood of Christ, on the other.² We can understand what a problem Pauline ethical-mysticism and semi-pagan or materialistic mysticism would create. On examining the 53rd verse of the sixth chapter of John we note a distinct change to realism from the spirituality of the 48th verse. With perhaps an ideal and honest intention to check the increasing reverence attached to the outward rite of the Supper, the author of the Fourth Gospel, by his accommodation, compromise, and even contradiction,

¹ "The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World," p.209.

² Op. cit., p.214.

has, as Angus says, "conduced to the evolution of sacramentalism in Christianity." Thus, both Paul and John helped to prepare the way for the magical ideas which crop out in Ignatius and Irenaeus and the rest.

(3) The Eucharist of the Didache.

Wernel describes the Didache as "a recent Jewish writing of an ethical nature taken over and turned into a Christian tract by a few scanty additions." The Jewish features which are so marked in the document, evidently give the basis for such a view. Unlike John, there are no Alexandrian ideas in it. On the whole it seems to represent Galilean custom and thought. Dobschutz thinks that the tract had proved itself by continual use as an effectual means of religious and moral instruction.¹

The Didache has several significant Eucharistic characteristics. In the first place, we find for the first time in Christian teaching the technical use of the term 'eucharist.' The word had arisen from the Greek word for blessing *εὐχαριστία*,² meaning

¹ "Christian Life of the Primitive Church," xxxvii.

² The Tebtunis Papyri, No. 56, of the late part of the second century B.C., has the word in a letter: ". . . in the first place to give thanks to the gods." Grenfell and Hunt, Pt. I. 1902.

'thanksgiving,' being similar, as we have noted above, to the Jewish idea of 'blessing.' Both words are found in the Synoptic accounts of the Last Supper. In brief, the following are the chief Eucharistic features of the Teaching of the Apostles or Didache:

(1) The wine comes before the bread.

(2) The Eucharist is associated with a common meal.

(3) The occasion for the Eucharist is a time of joyous thanksgiving to God for rich bodily and spiritual blessings, lacking the awful mystery we find in a later period.

(4) The whole act is a sacrifice of the community, *εὐχαριστία*, a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

"But on the Lord's day do ye assemble and break bread, and give thanks, after confessing your transgressions, in order that your sacrifice may be pure."¹

This was the sort of sacrifice demanded by Malachi.² So here, then, we have the genesis of the idea that the Eucharist is a sacrifice offered to God.³ But it is not the same kind of sacrifice, that the bread and wine, representing Christ's body and blood, are an atoning sacrifice, found in Justin Martyr. The Didache makes no mention of the

¹ XIV.

² 1:10.

³ XI, 9 speaks of ordering a table (*δρῖζων*). In Homer and Hesiod, he who offers a *ῥεζω* performs a sacrifice. This is the first time that *θυσία* (sacrifice) is applied to the Eucharist.

crucifixion of Jesus nor is there any mention of a priest. Redemption by blood is not spoken of. The absence of the words of institution: "This is my body; This is my blood," is indeed significant. There seems to be no theory of a Presence. The whole ceremony is itself a sacrificial thank-offering. The post-communion prayer (X) is very much like the Hallel. The conception of the bread and the wine is very much like that we find in John 6.

"But to us thou hast graciously given
spiritual food and drink and eternal
life through thy servant."¹

Only the baptized, however could eat and drink.

"But let no one eat or drink your
Eucharist, except those baptized into
the Lord."²

The ceremony after the common meal consisted of two parts: (1) An oblation, or offering, with thanksgiving, of the fruits of the earth—not of the body and blood of Christ. It is not until the time of Cyprian that we find Christ offered as a sacrifice. (2) Next followed the Eucharist, the blessing pronounced over the cup was as follows:

"We give thanks to Thee, our Father, for
the holy vine of David thy Servant, which thou
didst make known to us through Jesus Thy
Servant; to Thee be the glory forever."³

1 X.
2 IX.
3 Ibid.

The blessing over the bread was as follows:

"We give thanks to Thee, our Father,
for the life and knowledge which Thou didst
make known through Jesus Thy Servant;
to Thee be the glory forever."¹

This prayer, also, was made over the bread.

"As this broken bread was scattered
upon the mountains, and, being brought
together, became one, so let Thy church
be brought together from the ends of the
earth into Thy Kingdom, for Thine is the
Glory and the Power through Christ Jesus
forever."²

Ritualism can hardly be said to be dominant
in the church at the period of the Didache. The
ceremony of the Lord's Supper is simple and is
largely based on memory of that last night. Instead
of priestly obsession we note that the prophet
(true and tried) had especial claim to celebrate
the Eucharist, over the episcopoi, and could
offer extempore prayer in lieu of liturgical forms.

"But permit the prophets to offer
Εὐχαριστεῖν (thanksgiving) as they will."³

The Eucharist of the Didache, then, was but
a simple, elastic, Jewish-Christian communion meal,
viewed as a sacrifice. The sacrificial offering of
the Eucharist "is nothing less than an act of
prayer."⁴ Even the prayers were viewed as a sacrifice.
While the consecrated elements were conceived to be

¹ Op.cit.

² IX.

³ X

⁴ Harnack, "History of Christian Dogma," I, p.210, note.

mysterious vehicles of divine blessing, there is no thought of their being the actual body and blood of Christ. No distinction is made yet between symbol and vehicle. Partaking of the elements had no connection with the forgiveness of sins, so far as the Didache is concerned. The value of the Eucharist depended on the prayer of gratitude and thanksgiving brought by the communicants to the communion. Indeed, it is what we bring to the sacraments that make them at all of any value.

4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It may be said that there are many origins and various developments of the Eucharist. It is certainly impossible now to hold with Schaff that

"the Sacrament or the holy Supper was instituted by Christ under the most solemn circumstances when he was about to offer himself a sacrifice for the Salvation of the world."¹

Neither is there any evidence but the visionary mind of Paul, that Jesus gave the command or even intended the Supper to be perpetuated.

We have seen that the Eucharist was the result of a growth² based upon a combination

¹ "History of the Christian Church," rev.ed., p.472.

² At least three stages are distinguishable viz: (1) a common meal; (2) distinction between meals; and (3) finally dissociation of Eucharist and Agape.

of Jewish rites and customs with the Greek guild meal and a similar Christian love-feast. The resemblance of the Lord's Supper to the mystery-religion sacramental meals is very strong but this does not always mean imitation or direct borrowing. At the hands of Paul who borrowed mystery-religion phraseology, and under the influence of the naive realism of the writer of the Fourth Gospel, the Eucharist received that tendency towards pagan magic which comes to fruition in the following centuries.

Though a child of his age and very much a part of his Graeco-Hebrew world, Paul, nevertheless, advanced far beyond the magic and superstition of his time. He realized that the truest communion with Christ was a fellowship with his sufferings, a baptism with his death and a resurrection into a new life with his Lord.

We see, also, that the Communion of the Lord's Supper was not a sacramental meal peculiar only to Christianity. Such meals were common to all religions from ancient times. The Christian's attempt to eat his god was but the repercussion of a similar practice from primitive times. As we, then,

remove the primitive and magical aspects from the Eucharist, as Conybeare says

"they seem strange and absurd in this age because the ideas and atmosphere of the old sacrificial systems have long ago cleared away, and left the Eucharist hanging in the air naked and shorn of its old sympathetic background of pagan and Jewish superstitions."¹

We cannot agree with Inge that sacramental grace or "certain spiritual advantages are conferred through special channels (the sacraments)."² Nor with his statement that we attain by the sacraments "to a deeper consciousness of our union with Christ than by any other means."³ At such a claim for sacramental efficacy, an ancient cynic made this biting remark

"Shall Pataikion, the highwayman, have a happier lot than Epaminondas after death because of having taken the sacrament?"⁴

There is no evidence to show that Jesus confined spiritual benefits to sacramental 'channels,' neither is it true to all experience that we have closer union with Christ in this way than in any other.⁵ Indeed, religious rites and holy places

¹ "Myth, Magic and Morals," p.265.

² "Contentio Veritatis," p.300.

³ Ibid., p.308.

⁴ Diog. Laert. VI, 39.

⁵ The sacramental and the spiritual are not ultimately opposed and irreconcilable things, however.

were but incidentals of religion for him. They may or may not be necessary. The hour is coming when the true worshipper will worship God in spirit and in truth.

But we are not to conclude that we must dispense entirely with aids and means for spiritual worship. Aristotle truly said "The utterances of the voice are the symbols of the passion in the soul."¹ Man as man will always need symbolism to represent his awareness of the unseen. There is that from which his words turn back, and can only be suggested by symbolism. Who, indeed, knows the boundary between the physical and the spiritual, even in this scientific age. It is that part of the universe and that kind of reality which science cannot know, which symbolism and mysticism help to reveal. But man's spiritual communion cannot be confined to a sacramental meal alone. art, music, human love, April stars and Autumn sunsets, are also parts of the alphabet of the soul. But the trouble begins and magic enters in, as von Hugel truly says, only when and where things physical are taken to effect spiritual results apart altogether from minds transmitting and receiving.²

¹ De Interp., I.

² Essays and Addresses, p. 251.

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